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## A HAPPY NEW YEAR! ITS EMPTY MEANING FOR THE WORKERS.

It is usual at this time of year for each of us to greet all and sundry, friends, relatives, acquaintances, and the rest, with a wish that the ensuing year will be a happy one. One can read several lessons in this little practice. One can deduce the overwhelming power of custom which impels whole nations to utter the same common-places at the same time. One can be cynical and sneer at the empty meaningless formula that is so easy to utter and so divorced from actuality. One can also be fatuous, and jovially join in the universal quacking whilst also sharing in the universal forgetting which usually follows. But there is another attitude. Our lives are dotted with many such harmless and essentially useless little customs, and we can take advantage of them in just such measure as we can turn them to practical use. The phrase, "A Happy New Year to you" dies as it is born, for it is just a wish. Few or none ever follow, it by a single thought on what would constitute a happy year or on how such a period could be established. There are difficulties, of course.

Happiness is a condition which almost defies definition. Millions have sought it; in fact it might be described as man's chief pursuit. Of those who claim to have been successful we are in grave doubt. Some have seen in the amassing of worldly goods the clearest road to happiness. Having achieved it scores of them tell us it was not worth the trouble. Others have held that happiness consists in making the fewest possible demands on life; on limit-

ing one's needs to the most frugal necessities. This view is always suspect. One always wonders if they are cutting their philosophic coat according to their very material cloth. Others speak of a *via media*, a middle road, perfectly level, and only mildly eventful. From its even surface one benignantly surveys the unhappy rich on the surrounding heights, burdened with great possessions; and one gazes pityingly into the valley below, where struggle the millions not so burdened. Philosophers, teachers, orators, and preachers, all down the ages have counted their lives well spent in telling mankind how to be happy. Yet mankind is not happy. Like children, mankind usually imagines happiness to consist in the immediate satisfaction of some momentary need. That need satisfied, a short interval finds the elusive bird of happiness has again taken flight, and the eternal chase begins anew. One meets people to whom Fortune has dealt the most stunning blows, and who yet seem to find life a huge joke. One knows others to whom Fate has never been unkind, and who are profoundly miserable.

This is not the most scientific way of examining the question of happiness. One can multiply individual instances until the brain reels, and draw no valid conclusion whatever. So far as one can offer a formula at all, happiness would seem to consist in a frame of mind, varying with individual temperament, wherein it feels good to be alive, born of good health and nourished by good conditions. Complete happiness is too near ecstasy to be possible

or even desirable, but we can at least examine the conditions that make or mar our lives, and render them reasonably happy, or the reverse.

First, being living beings, it is essential to happiness that primary necessities should be available for all. These prime needs are self-evidently food, shelter and clothing. Now without following any of the philosophers into obscure discussions on the nature and pursuit of happiness, let us see to what extent we are supplied with the first, elementary ingredients of creative comfort and existence. The columns of this journal have groaned with official figures, giving the numbers of those of us perpetually on the verge of starvation. There is no need to give them again. The daily Press gives constant illustration of wide-spread permanent poverty, and it is a commonplace that millions of Great Britain's workers have but a nodding acquaintance with a square meal. Food, the first physical requisite of life, is scarce, adulterated, and of doubtful quality.

What of shelter? Here the situation is more obvious. An empty house is more easily visible than an empty stomach. Our civilisation cannot properly shelter its people. It simply refers to their sorry condition as a "Housing Problem," and speaks of gradually overtaking it in some 30 or 50 years. The "problem" is tacitly attributed to the war, but the festering slums of Hanley, Ancoats or Sheffield, of Glasgow, Lanark, or Belfast, existed long previous to the war. Just the same terrible tales of big families occupying one room, of verminous tenements, of crime, and immorality due to overcrowding, of dilapidated dwellings, of people living in cowsheds—just the same florid facts used to decorate the daily papers before the war as since. And they had just as much effect. Enough was done to keep capitalist society secure, and little more. The facts are not obscure. Even the *Daily Express* (Dec. 19), that staunch upholder of things as they are, gives its readers the thrill they love in a column describing present-day conditions in Southwark.

Those who travel by tramcar or omnibus along Blackfriars Road or through Stamford Street, or the main roads leading from Blackfriars and the Elephant to London Bridge have no conception of the network of hovels, the jig-saw of warrens on either hand, in which thousands of people exist.

Warrens! A rabbit would not live in them. Some of them are nothing more than sewer abodes for human rats.

Here is a court eight feet wide, with twelve so-called houses in it. No backs to the houses. Each house, two rooms. No place to wash, no place to cook.

At one end of the court are three open lavatories. At the other end one, and another in the centre. Men, women and children, tenants paying rent that should ensure good cottage accommodation, all use them. Tramps from the alleys, lewd women, anybody could have access. One was locked up. That left four to the whole colony of, say, 100 people.

"We women dare not approach these places after dark," said one young wife whose life has been utterly damned in this network of misery. "Look at my home," she added in an agony of despair.

There were eight beings existing in the two small dismal rooms.

"If only I could get out of it!" she cried.

#### ALL THE SAME.

I went into house after house. There was no sign of alleviation anywhere. I was in misery-land. It was blank tragedy. One of the people spoke quietly in tones of utter despair. Others raved against landlords. Some cursed life itself.

And so on for a column. And the remedy? None was mentioned.

And then clothing. No figures are needed here. One simply uses one's eyes and supplements that by personal experience. Is it an exaggeration to state that the vast majority of workers are inadequately clothed and shod, and that most of what they do wear is shoddy?

Then with a perpetual paucity of the three primal necessities, would we not be better employed in searching for the root cause of this simple misery than searching for abstract definitions of happiness. Has there been a great natural famine? Is Mother Nature a niggard? Has some great catastrophe dried up the fountains of well-being? There is no evidence of it. Rather the contrary. We read about a month since of enormous catches of fish in the North Sea. We read also of boat-loads being thrown away so as not to spoil the market. We are told further that millions of acres of food-growing land have gone out of cultivation. We learn also that the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile workers are standing idle, waiting for their cloth to be saleable. Some time back the bootmakers of Kettering, Leicester, Northampton, were starving because of "over-production," that is, they had made too many boots. There seems to be something wrong somewhere. Nature appears to be

doing her part. It is evidently in this "market" where lies the trouble. Obviously instead of goods being produced to supply human necessities, this can only be done through the medium of a sale. And if a sale cannot be effected the goods remain where they are and the would-be recipient goes without. Evidently, therefore, it is not sufficient for the farmer, the fisherman, the fruit-grower, the cattle-raiser, to know that hungry humanity needs their produce. The builder will not build simply because people want houses. The weaver will not weave solely because we shall perish without clothing. These needs must exist, certainly, but their satisfaction depends entirely upon a sale taking place. But is this not a reasonable state of things? Do we advocate a system where goods are given away? We do not! But we say a better system of supplying ordinary physical needs can be evolved than one that introduces starvation as a consequence of plenty. Than one that compels the producers of wealth to hire out their one possession—their power to labour—for the cost of their upkeep. Than one that condemns them to starve in the midst of the plenty they have created because they cannot buy back the whole of their product. We say that human society could be and should be a coherent whole. That all should take part in the necessary work of production, and that all should share in the common result. Can it be done? Let us conclude with an illustration.

Some few months back our astronomers directed their telescopes upon our beautiful celestial neighbour, the planet Mars. Several claimed to have discovered overwhelming proof of the existence thereon of sentient beings. Their difficulties were recognised even at a distance of hundreds of millions of miles, and they had overcome them in a highly ingenious way. Their great enemy, drought, had been met by the construction of tremendous canals that conducted the melting polar snows to the more fertile, warmer regions near their equator. Even the fact that the incidence of sunshine varied in the two hemispheres over a period of thousands of years had been provided for. But one significant thing seemed to escape the reflections of our astronomers. All their observations implied that the Martians viewed their planet as a coherent whole, a common possession. None was guilty of the lunacy

of suggesting that the Martians were divided into separate, jealous, warring gangs, each gang subdivided into toilers and parasites. It is not impossible, of course, but all our scientists' suggestions tacitly recognised that works of such magnitude, directed to a common end, would naturally be the work of beings who had risen superior to the stupid divisions with which we are familiar. Then let us take a celestial leaf from their (possibly non-existent) book, and view our earth as a common heritage. Let all take part in the winning of wealth from Mother Nature's storehouse. Then let all share in the result of a co-operative mutual effort. Let us banish slavery, poverty, ignorance and wretchedness to the limbo of forgotten things. You have nothing to lose but your chains: you have a world to win.

W. T. H.

## A LOOK ROUND.

### THE PROGRESS OF POVERTY.

How much improvement has taken place in working class home life (!) since Engels wrote "The Condition of the Working Class in 1884"? Despite eighty years of capitalist reform every industrial area to-day contains its quagmire of slumdom. Our masters pretend horror, for they say the wicked Socialists would destroy that sanctified citadel of the humblest—the home. But lo! what is this?

Five children, their mother and father, had been compelled to sleep in one room, so tiny that it would not hold a cot ("Daily Chronicle," 5-12-24).

A child was consequently smothered, and at the inquest a neighbour said:—

"In her home a girl of 20, a boy of 17, a boy of 13, and another child all slept in one room."

In an appeal case (murder) at Warwick Assizes, defence drew the attention of the court to the appalling conditions under which the prisoner lived:—

Three families lived in 3 rooms and X, his wife and 10 children occupied one room, 7 sleeping in one bed ("Evening News," 8-12-24).

In one riding of Yorkshire 3,000 children have been excluded from the public elementary schools suffering from tuberculosis, admittedly due to overcrowding in the mining district. (*Manchester Guardian*, 1-12-24). The Capitalists are quite aware that such conditions prevail, and have made

them an asset for vote catching for years. In the first case cited the foreman of the jury considered a rider useless: as plenty of pressure had been put upon the authorities for years without making any difference. Is there a remedy within the present system? Grant that your masters allow you to be better housed you will become more efficient workers, and eventually fewer of you will be needed to produce the limited wealth their markets can absorb. The years have proved that any attempt to alleviate your conditions in one direction often worsens them in another.

While Capitalism lasts your social suffering whatever its form is the necessary accompaniment of your slave existence, it must continue while you tolerate that system. There is nothing to choose between deterioration as a slum dweller, an unemployed worker, or an employed one for that matter. Your choice must be between freedom or slavery.

A study of Socialism will teach you that it will be just as hellish to be sweated and robbed of life under a Labour administered Capitalism as under any Liberal or Tory inferno.

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#### EMPIRE, HONOUR, AND COTTON.

According to the *Democrat*, 29-11-24, there are amongst us many who aver that British Imperialism is "grossly materialistic," and embedded in a greed that is as callous as it is brutal. Of course it isn't true; at least so says the writer. "Our" Empire, we are told, means lots of things, such as "the keeping together in happy union many millions of human beings," and not forgetting our old friends "Honour and Justice." We begin to sniff when we read: "that was one reason why the British Government were right in their firmness with Egypt," but our lofty altruism comes a cropper when the same page informs us:

"The Sudan has become a great cotton-growing area, producing a raw material superior in quality to any other cotton grown in the wide world."

And what a blow to those trusting souls of the I.L.P. and others, their peace preserving League of Nations "goes to pieces" at the first touch of reality:

"Any intervention, therefore, of the League invoked by Egypt will be un-

acceptable to His Majesty's Government." (*Morning Post*, 5-12-24).

\* \* \*

#### PHILANTHROPIC TASK MASTERS.

The daily business of the worker is production of good articles for mankind to use. The Capitalist's task is to provide the money, find the markets, organise the work, so as to spread the benefits all round (Business Organisation, Dec.)

What a delightful world we live in—according to the Capitalist. For a jumble of concentrated cant, half truth, and deliberate falsehood, the above wants beating. No unemployment, no shoddy, adulterated commodities, no sad lives, the sole purpose of human existence is to enable our rulers to "spread the benefits all round." And how, pray, are they spread vide one of their own apologists?

When we realise that 38 out of our 43 millions are poor, the statement of Booth and Rowntree ceases to surprise us. In analysis the United Kingdom is seen to contain a great multitude of poor people veneered with a thin layer of the comfortable and rich (P43, Riches and Poverty. C. Money).

To-day it is the workers' task to furnish the energy required to convert the earth's resources to social means of living, including the making of the money with which they are paid, and the supervising and organising of such wealth production. Any child or imbecile possessed of wealth could play the part of landlord, shareholder, or dummy director, nor need you tax your brain capacity greatly to understand why they attempt to conceal the fact. When you do you will smile with contempt at the vapid inference that the Capitalist is a Capitalist for your benefit.

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#### MOCK PRUDENCE.

One of the traditional scares served up for the non-thinking worker is that of the immoral teaching of Socialism. We are not concerned with our masters farm-yard morality beyond exposing the humbug of their pious dread. Some people know that shop-lifting can be termed stealing or kleptomania, according to the social position of the individual concerned. In back numbers of the *Socialist Standard* we have shown that even the White Slave Traffic can be elevated to something less criminal and obnoxious when its patrons are wealthy and move in the best society (sic).

The debauchery of a ruling class has ever been a symptom of decadence from

the orgies of the Roman Empire to the licentious escapades of our modern parasites, details of which their own Press often consider unfit for print. It is interesting to note the different tones adopted by our opponents in their attempts to discredit Socialism and that assumed when the "idealistic indiscretion" involves a six-figure gift for the use of another man's wife. Socialism will allow both women and men the fullest access to the means of life. Under such conditions human affection unfettered by economic considerations need consider no other attraction than that which is mutual, thus removing the sordid and mercenary basis of sex relations to-day.

MAC.

#### THE CAPITALIST PRINCIPLES OF THE I.L.P.

It is common enough to hear the I.L.P. and the Labour Party attacked and defended on the ground that they are Socialist parties. Yet we find leading members of the I.L.P. affirming that the Labour Party is not really socialist, and members of the Labour Party agreeing with them. Indeed, if the members of the I.L.P. considered the Labour Party a Socialist party they could not very well justify retaining their own separate organisation claiming to be socialist, too. Then, again, the Socialist Party of Great Britain opposes both of these parties and maintains that they are anti-socialist.

It cannot fail to be confusing to the enquirer about Socialism to witness this disagreement between those who are all apparently socialists, and an attempt is usually made to dismiss the disagreement as a question not of principles but of policy and method, and of only minor importance. "We are all," they say, "bound for the same place, but we travel by different roads." Yet this explanation is not by any means true, for our opposition is not concerned merely with method, but is one of basic principle. We have to reject offers to sink our differences and join forces because we travel by a different road to a different place. The success of the I.L.P. would mean defeat for us, and we can get what we want only after defeating them.

If there exists this clash of aims no good purpose is served by minimising it, or ignoring it; hence our assertion that the

I.L.P. is not deserving of working-class support.

We must, however, not attach undue importance to mere names. We cannot prevent our opponents from calling their politics "Socialism" however much they differ from our own. The importance lies not in the name but in the thing, what it is and what it does for the workers, not what it is called. The Socialist Party and the I.L.P. both come before you to tell you the cause and the remedy for your poverty and insecurity. What we want you to notice is that their explanations and their remedies differ from ours as chalk does from cheese, in spite of an apparent similarity in the use of words. There are people who think that the I.L.P. and the Socialist Party are both wrong, but what you ought to avoid at all costs is thinking that we can both be right. If we are right, then the I.L.P. are wrong and vice versa. We ask you to examine our principles and choose between us.

To make clear why the Socialist Party takes up this uncompromising attitude, let us examine the case it presents.

We live in a system of society which by general agreement is known as Capitalism, and whose outstanding features are private property and wage-earning. A certain few fortunate individuals are the owners of the land, the railways, factories and other means of production, and the non-owners have to work for a wage or a salary in the service of the owners of property. Society is divided into a class of workers who must work to live, and a class of capitalists who can live without working. We know from everyday experience that there is no wealth without work, yet the workers are poor and the non-workers are rich. The Socialist says that the poverty of the poor and the riches of the wealthy are the results of the system of private property, and the only remedy is its abolition. We do not condemn the Capitalists as "wicked" because they live by exploiting the workers, but we do regard private property as no longer necessary to society. We shall, therefore, deprive them of their property. Whatever services the Capitalists may have rendered in the early days of their system in directing industry and as the medium through which accumulations of capital were made, they render needful services no longer. Society can manage now without

them, but they still continue to levy tribute on production to which they make no active contribution. It is now a quite normal Capitalist practice for the property owner to be, in fact and in the eyes of the law, a passive investor without knowledge of the industry or the right to share in the management. Occupying this position it is possible for the wealthy to live in luxury and yet grow continually wealthier. The Capitalist is, moreover, interested in production only from the point of view of the dividend-receiver. There is hardly an industry in which more or less complete combination does not exist, and an admitted object of combination is to control and limit production in the interest of the shareholder. We even have associations of employers providing individual firms with an annual grant conditional on their loyally refraining from producing anything.

Socialism will terminate once and for all the right of any individual to receive rents, profits, or interest by virtue of being an owner of property. THE ONLY JUSTIFICATION for a claim on the produce of industry for able-bodied persons will be that they give personal service. Work, and work alone, will entitle any fit man to consume the wealth which work alone produces. That is the Socialist aim, but it is not the aim of the I.L.P. Their slogan is not the *abolition*, but the *stabilisation* of profit and interest.

They endorse and wish to extend the movement in Capitalism towards removing from the hand of the Capitalist whatever active control of industry there is left to him, thus making him simply a passive owner receiving interest by right of ownership. They wish to hasten the Capitalist tendency towards nationalisation, and propose to give the Capitalist Government Bonds which will guarantee to him a secure and regular income without risk of loss, and without the right to share directly in administration, at the same time saving him the expense and trouble of dealing with the discontent of the workers. The I.L.P. does not attack the rights of capital; it defends them and holds out hopes of adding to their value. In the fight between the Socialist and the defenders of Capitalism, it stands on the side of property.

Thus, in "Socialism, Critical and Constructive," in chapter 7, which is headed, "Socialist Society," Mr. J. R. MacDonald

writes:—"When Labour uses Capital and pays it its market value, property is defensible, when Capital uses Labour and retains . . . the maximum share in the product upon which it can keep its grip, property is devoid of a sure defence." (Page 274).

In "How Socialists would run Industry" (I.L.P. Programme. Pamphlet, Number 5, 1924) a footnote on page 14 asks: "Why should not Labour hire Capital and devote the whole of the surplus to the improvement of the service?" and again: "... the surplus earnings after paying a fixed rate of interest for the hire of loan capital, should . . . be reserved for specific purposes. . . ."

In "Socialism in the Village" (I.L.P., 1920) we read: "The owners will receive Government Bonds in return for their land, the interest on which will be more than covered by the rents paid to the State" (page 5), and (page 7): "There is every reason to expect that agriculture under public management will yield a far better return on labour and capital than it now does." A prominent member of the I.L.P. is Mr. J. Wheatley, himself the owner of considerable property, and ex-Minister of Health. In a recent speech reported in the *Daily Herald* (20th November) he declared that "The only hope of saving us from catastrophe lies in a certain number of influential Capitalists recognising that Capitalism itself is becoming the greatest menace to their capital. Nationalisation is likely to prove the only way to salvation." He goes on to elaborate his proposals and adds: "It could be effected without making the Capitalists poorer, or lowering their standard of life." In a pamphlet, "The Catholic Working Man," a publication of the "Catholic Socialist Society" (1909) which declares its "heartly agreement" with the I.L.P., Mr. Wheatley expressly clears himself from the charge of being a Socialist in the sense understood by the Socialist Party. He remarks that his political creed "differs from the Socialism condemned by the Pope in that it retains the right to own private property" (page 22) and he assures his critics that nationalisation will show "due consideration of vested rights."

When we remember that of the Labour M.P.s in the last House of Commons well over half were members of the I.L.P., we

see in their support of the policies of the Labour Government further evidence of their anti-socialism. Mr. Wheatley introducing his Housing Bill declared in reply to an interruption, that "The proposals which I am submitting are real Capitalism—an attempt to patch up in the interests of humanity, a Capitalist ordered society." (See "Houses to Let," page 8. A verbatim report published by the T.U.C. and the Labour Party.) He again made his position clear in a speech at Glasgow on Sunday, November 2nd, when he commented on the election results. "My own view of the return of the Tories in such an overwhelming majority is that it will considerably hasten the end of the Capitalist system of society. . . . Had the Labour Government been allowed to proceed it would have produced a greater amount of content among the toiling multitude, and it would have established Capitalism longer than it is likely to exist now." (*Times*, November 3rd.) The Socialist does not, of course, believe that it is possible to improve materially the workers' position inside Capitalism, nor that the return of a Conservative majority will hasten the progress to Socialism, but of the deadly work done by the Labour Party and the I.L.P. in making the workers contented with the private property system there can be no doubt.

Another prominent member of the I.L.P. is Mr. R. H. Tawney, author of "The Acquisitive Society." On pages 66 and 177, after condemning various forms of property, he argues that the payment of "pure interest" will be necessary under what he calls "Socialism." It is justified, he says, provided the owner of the capital is not allowed to have any share in, or responsibility for, the organisation of industry.

We see, then, that the view generally held by the I.L.P. members is that poverty can be removed without the abolition of private property in the means of production; while the Socialist Party demands, as the only solution, the extinction of all property claims whatever their name and form.

Were it not for the repeated refusal of the I.L.P. to defend its principles on the public platform against the criticism of the Socialist, the question might usefully have been thrashed out in debate. H.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

### HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

We are continuously asked why we don't publish new pamphlets or re-publish old ones that are out of print. Our answer has been to point to that ever-pressing problem of finance. A party like ours, depending upon its members for financial support and faced with the inevitable poverty of a working-class membership—our party is forced to curb its publishing activity within very narrow limits. Such a valuable and much-needed publication as our party pamphlet, "Socialism and Religion," is urgently required at a low price, and its re-publication in that form would find a ready sale. It would have been re-issued long ago had sufficient funds come in.

Amongst other publications very much needed we have in view a pamphlet on the Principles of Socialism. The enormous amount of rubbish printed in the name of Socialism in recent years, with its confusing effect on the workers' minds, makes the scientific and revolutionary pronouncements of The Socialist Party an urgent necessity. We have, therefore, opened a fund called "A New Publications Fund," which will be reserved for the purpose of new publications. We invite members and sympathisers immediately to send in donations marked for that fund. If you cannot afford much send in the little you can. If the readers of the *Socialist Standard* who appreciate the soundness of our party position will hurry along their contributions to the fund we can rapidly get to work.

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## The Socialist Standard,

JANUARY



1925

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE WORKING CLASS.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC.

Ever since the existing social order originated in the downfall of feudalism, there has been going on a struggle between the two classes of which it is composed, *i.e.*, the capitalist or master-class and the wage-slave or working-class. As a result of this struggle, ever increasing in its intensity and ever widening in its scope, there has arisen a certain degree of organisation on the part of both classes. Up to the present the initiative in the struggle has lain with the masters and the efficiency of their organisation is correspondingly greater than that of the workers, whose lot has in the main consisted of a series of defeats resulting in increased poverty and exploitation. There is urgent need for improvement in the workers' organisation, hence the propaganda of the Socialist Party.

Socialist theory is the result of scientific effort to explain the class struggle, *i.e.*, to discover its cause, the line of its development and its eventual outcome. Socialists, therefore, are essentially and directly involved in this struggle, and have a distinct point of view to express regarding the organisation of their class.

A glance over the field of battle reveals at once the fact that the workers' organisation at present is a conglomeration of fragments rather than an organic whole. It consists of innumerable unions professing to function in the interests of different sections, overlapping to an appallingly wasteful degree and confusing the workers by their various "programmes." It is realised by some of the workers that one union for one class is essential if defeat is ever to be converted into victory. What is not so clearly recognised is that such a union must be a Socialist union.

To exist at all a union of the entire working-class must at least have a common object, and one looks around in vain for any other object but Socialism which is capable of becoming common to all sections. Unity is impossible so long as the mass of the workers see no further than the immediate struggle over wages and hours, etc., which necessarily vary in different localities and occupations. This is not saying that such struggle can or should be abandoned while capitalism lasts. On the contrary, no one is more determined in the prosecution of the defensive fight than the Socialist since those who cannot defend will make poor material for conducting an attack. What does, however, need emphasising is that victory cannot be obtained within the limits of the wage system. So long as the master-class possess the means of life so long will the workers be condemned to poverty and slavery.

The first essential then is a change in the outlook of the workers, in the goal of their struggle. They must become class conscious and take the initiative. They must determine to attack the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour.

The next point to become agreed upon is the line of action or policy to be adopted in conducting this attack. This can only be determined by the nature of the conditions existing. In points of detail these conditions are constantly changing. It is, therefore, impossible to lay down in advance a detailed programme to be adopted in the hour of the social revolution. Certain fundamental features of the existing order make it both possible and necessary to outline the general character of the policy to be pursued.

In the first place it is important to realise that the existing order is maintained by

political means, *i.e.*, by the machinery of government in the hands of organisations of the master-class. A consideration of industrial conditions soon reveals why this must be so. To-day the *occupiers* or *users* of the various industrial plants are not the *owners*; if they were, there would be no social problem, *i.e.*, no class struggle.

*Ownership* to-day consists not in occupation but in mere *legal* title, meaningless, unless recognised and upheld by the forces of the State. The overthrow of capitalist ownership, therefore, and the establishment of common ownership, involves the capture of the State by the working-class. Dispossession necessitates disarmament. The organisation of the working-class must, therefore, be a political organisation, *i.e.*, a Socialist Party.

The nature of its object and the circumstances of its origin compel a Socialist party to oppose all other parties at all times and without exception, since these parties can exist only to preserve in some shape or form the system which the Socialist Party is out to abolish.

The existing confusion among the workers organised in the Trade Unions has enabled a crowd of professional politicians drawn from the ranks of both classes, to form a party claiming to have special regard for the interests of the workers. This party is, financially, nothing but a parasite upon the Trade Unions, depriving them of strength (which could be used for fighting against the masters) in order to further a political policy very little different from that of Liberal capitalists. Such difference as exists between them is of no consequence to the workers. In spite of this fact, however, numerous critics of the Labour Party profess to believe that the Trade Unions are *part* of it. The Labour Party is allowed to claim that it is the political organisation of the Trade Unions *as such*.

The Socialist Party disputes this claim. A Trade Unionist *as such* has no particular political creed. He may be a Liberal or a Conservative, a Socialist or an Anarchist, or alternatively, utterly indifferent to political matters. The essential concern of a Trade Union is obviously the industrial conditions, particularly affecting its members; it is a *sectional* organisation and thus cannot form the basis of a political party whose concern is *class* interest.

What, then, is the attitude of the Socialist Party towards the Trade Unions? Necessarily it is one of propaganda. To the extent that the Trade Unions defend the immediate interest of the workers, the Socialist Party supports them. It combats, however, every action on their part, political or otherwise, which assists the master-class. For the rest it advocates the obliteration of sectional and financial restrictions on membership. The organisation of the workers must be based upon *class* interests.

Much valuable time is wasted by some otherwise intelligent workers in advocating detailed *plans* of organisation. "Industrialists?" of various shades endeavour to map out in advance the structure of the revolutionary embryo. They forget that society is an organism and not a piece of architecture; that organs only develop as the need for them arises. The function of industrial administration in the fullest sense cannot pass into the hands of the workers until they have secured possession of the means of life in the manner indicated above.

The task of a revolutionary body is, therefore, the accumulation of revolutionary material, *i.e.*, Socialists. The elaboration of this material into organic shape will depend upon the development of the conditions of its existence, the *details* of which, not being prophets, we cannot foresee. For us it is enough to proclaim the revolutionary slogan, "The world for the workers," and to organise and act in accordance therewith.

"In England, Journalism, except in a few well-known instances, not having been carried to such excesses of brutality, is still a great factor, a really remarkable power. The tyranny that it proposes to exercise over people's private lives seems to me quite extraordinary."

"The fact is that the public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything except what is worth knowing."

"Journalism, conscious of this, and having tradesmen-like habits, supplies the demands. In centuries before ours, the public nailed the ears of journalists to the pump."

"That was quite hideous."

"In this century journalists have nailed their own ears to the keyhole."

"That is much worse."

OSCAR WILDE.

## THE ECONOMICS OF SOCIAL AMUSEMENT.

### I.

The history of mankind's social amusements and recreational activities corresponds closely with and can only be explained from the development of economic life and of successive forms of society.

Man is a gregarious creature, and to be at one with his herd—with a multitude of his kind when it is surging with a common emotion and to be feeling, thinking and expressing his feeling in unison with his fellows is one of the most stirring and pleasurable things he can experience. This psychological factor is strikingly manifest in all organised play and entertainment, but to explain the forms of recreation prevailing at any time we must consider the conditions of economic and social life in which they have their roots.

Primitive man must have had little opportunity for pure play of a systematic and organised kind, but with increased productiveness came relief from strictly useful employment and various forms of true social amusements came into being—often by the modification of more serious occupations.

The savage hunting tribe indulges in strange dancing and singing that is quite mystifying to the uninitiated observer. He may explain these—to him—weird performances as forms of diversion and relaxation; but to the savage they have a very serious and practical significance. They are magical rites by which he believes he can influence the rainfall or the supply of animals or bring luck to the tribe in its hunting. They are, therefore, to him a necessary part of his economic life.

Even later, when agriculture is practised and patriarchal organisation has grown up ritual dances and seasonal festivals exist which are intimately connected with the fertility of the soil, the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the crops.

These ceremonial practices, serious as were their objects, undoubtedly generated in the people who took part in them a high degree of emotional excitement and pleasure and contained the germs of the true public amusements of the future. In that very interesting book, "Ancient Art and Ritual," Jane Harrison describes for us the evolution among the Greeks from the spring festival of Dionysos—the spirit of vegeta-

tion—to the genuine dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles—from the *dromena* or rite to the *drama* or play.

With the institution of slavery came also a leisured class and, thus stimulated, the arts of pleasure reached a high pitch of variety, refinement and extravagance.

In Greece and Rome the enormous population of slaves had, in the main, little or no leisure nor amusement, but in the lives of the free citizens, both rich and poor, the public games, theatres and festivals came to play an increasingly important rôle. To all citizens admission to the arena and the theatres was free, or the fee only nominal. They were publicly organised by the State or the city authorities, were held usually at the religious festivals and continued to have vital social importance and some degree of religious significance throughout the entire period of their history.\* They acted as a social bond, emphasising the common tradition and stimulating the sentiments of patriotism and citizenship. Thus they were a factor of considerable importance in welding all grades of freemen into a solid mass in opposition to the numerically overwhelming but unorganised and politically impotent slaves. Moreover as, particularly in the Roman dominions, slaves were used in the public games in great numbers and without the slightest regard either for their feelings or their lives, the arena became a means of widening the gulf 'twixt slave and free, increasing class contempt, arrogance and hatred, developing even further the callousness and cruelty of the free class and yet inspiring them with an increasingly intense fear of widespread revolt amongst the chained, suffering mass in the underworld.

When Roman civilisation reached its zenith the slave-system was so extensive and the supply of slaves so well organised that free-labour became economically unprofitable whilst morally it came to be regarded as the contemptible badge of servility and beneath the dignity of free citizens. In the cities an ever-growing multitude of workless and propertyless free-men became dependent upon the free distribution of corn by the State. Then came the clamour for

\* The Bull-fight in the Spanish countries—a relic of Roman domination—is a modern survival of this phase.

amusement and more and more of it, and the wealthy slave-owners and politicians who dominated the State were compelled to yield to the insistent demands of the reckless horde of state-fed citizens.

The so-called "games" had now become a political necessity, and they assumed extraordinary proportions, and became ever more extravagant and terrible spectacles. At the great Roman circuses wild beasts from every part of the Empire were matched in combat, and thousands of slaves fought to the death for the diversion and excitement of immense throngs of citizens. In such a debauch ended ancient civilisation, based on the first primary form of exploitation—chattel-slavery.

Under the mediæval feudal system which retained the village community and much of patriarchal society, the public games and entertainments were again markedly social, traditional and religious in character, but they strongly reflected the hard and fixed system of class differentiation characteristic of feudalism. The serfs and peasants had their own Maypole and other semi-ritual festivals connected with cultivation; and these, though they had a veneer of Christianity, were hoary with an antiquity going back far into barbarism—as we have previously noted. The Church, ever on the watch for subtle means of maintaining its hold upon society, held its Mystery and Morality plays which were often performed within the walls of the Churches and monasteries. These religious plays were, of course, intended to foster belief and provide religious instruction rather than amusement, but there is evidence that they were amusing enough and they were certainly the nearest thing to the true drama that the Mediæval period evolved. The nobility, a class closely marked off from the rest of the population, had its own peculiar institution—the tournament, which fostered the veneration for rank and the warlike virtues so necessary to a class owing its existence and its sanction to the sword.

Economic evolution undermined the feudal system and killed it. With the growth of trade and commercial relations of production, the disappearance of serfdom and the rise of the wages system, the old social order of things, with all its ideas, its sentiments and its customs, lost its economic basis and slowly and tardily passed away.

The village community was broken up,

the common lands disappeared and the population concentrated into the towns; social and personal ties were replaced by monetary relations—in the language of the jurists "status" gave place to "contract." The rigid stratification of social orders with fixed rights and duties was dissolved and in its stead arose a system wherein the possession of money alone formed the class division and which knew as a regulating force only the balance of the market—the impersonal, non-traditional pressure of "economic law." It was the new era of "liberty, equality and fraternity"—capitalism.

As it expanded itself the new economy cut the social soil from under the feudal forms of amusement and new forms began to appear. The mountebank and strolling player (the primitive actor, dancer, singer and clown) even under feudalism was the counterpart of the earliest travelling merchant, the pedlar moving from village to village with his wares. But the nerve-centre of the new system was in the towns, there the merchant was established, and the new classes—capitalist and proletarian—were arising, and there developed the new habits of thought and the new amusements—among them, the theatre. The first public theatre in England was opened in Blackfriars, London, in 1576, and others were soon established and were performing the works of Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists.

The new theatre was from the first free from the feudal tradition. It was commercial in its aim and methods, had no connection with the Church, which indeed opposed it, and it voiced the new dawning spirit of individualism. Since its birth the bourgeois theatre has flourished, and it is perhaps the most typical social amusement of the bourgeois era.

The only set-back in the history of the modern theatre took place under the freakish domination of the Puritans, to which we can here only briefly refer. The Puritans were a section of the lower bourgeoisie who developed to an extreme degree a religion and philosophy of life involving excessive reverence for the petty-capitalist virtues of industry, thrift and accumulation and who frowned upon all amusement and frivolity as sinful. During their short period of political rule in England and America they attempted with partial success

the suppression of all forms of social entertainment. Their social influence unfortunately long outlasted their actual rule in both countries.

The subject matter of the drama is not here our prime concern, but it may be noted that with the rise of bourgeois relations of life and of individualism in outlook, traditional, mystical, symbolic and heroic themes tended to be supplanted by studies of individual character and of personal problems, especially sexual ones, that the individual in society is compelled to face. In these plays bourgeois morality, ideals of conduct and theories control the plot and action.

On the other hand, since capitalism has entered on its decadent phase and its insoluble difficulties have become chronically manifest, the satirist and social critic has increasingly used the medium of the drama and plays denouncing the evils and ridiculing the inconsistencies of the social order have appeared. The Ibsens, Shaws and Galsworthys are products of this phase. This class of drama is, however, as yet appreciated and supported by only a comparatively small section of theatregoers, and even these are largely tolerant members of the bourgeoisie. R. W. HOUSLEY.

(End of Part I.)

#### KNOWLEDGE.

The following books can be obtained from Head Office:—

"Anarchism and Socialism" (Plechanoff), price 3/6 (paper 1/2).

"Civil War in France" (Marx), price 2/9.

"Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844" (Engels), price 5/-.

"Critique of Political Economy" (Marx), price 6/6.

"18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" (Marx), price 3/6.

"Evolution of Property" (Lafargue), price 3/6 (limp 1/6).

"Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (Engels), price 3/6.

"Poverty of Philosophy" (Marx), price 6/6.

"Revolution and Counter-revolution" (Marx), price 3/6 (limp 1/6).

"Social and Philosophical Studies" (Lafargue), price 3/6.

"Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (Engels), price 3/6 (limp 1/6).

Postage extra.

## SOCIALISM AND THE SO-CALLED "MIDDLE CLASS."

### THE SALARIED SLAVES.

The present writer wears a stiff collar as a boot-maker wears a leather apron, or as a lamplighter carries a pole—it is the sign and badge of his profession. He is a bank clerk. Not having been blessed with that rare quality reserved for some members of the capitalist class alone—business ability—and lacking foresight, he was foolish enough to choose two proletarians for his parents, although there were millionaires available. He is now reaping the reward of his pre-natal folly in an office. He is a "brain worker," selling his labour-power for wages, but not by the week, mark you, not by the week, but by the month!

Ignoring outward signs of superiority, the brain worker can be distinguished from the mere plebian by the following characteristics. He uses a machine to do his writing, another machine to do his calculations, is very respectable and deferentially reverent towards those set in authority over him. Moreover, he, as he is only too fond of saying, is the backbone of the Empire, the defender of the constitution, and at the same time the crushed worm between the millstones of organised Labour and Capital. To the first he pays its wages, the other he pays its profits, and in short he thinks that he occupies a very special position in the community, a position which needs and deserves to be defended from the wicked Socialists. A Socialist bank-clerk is, therefore, somewhat of an enigma to those among whom he works. He is frequently asked what he hopes to get out of being a Socialist, what he stands to gain by the overthrow of Capitalism, what there is in his present condition to cause him dissatisfaction.

It is the purpose of this article to answer briefly as many of these questions as space will allow. It is hoped to prove that Socialism is the only political theory of any use to all workers, and in so doing to show that there is no "middle class," that in Capitalist society, as we know it to-day, there are but two classes, and that anyone, whether he be a navvy or a bank manager, who is compelled to sell his labour power for wages, and who can only exist at a given standard of comfort by such a sale,

is a member of the working class, is a proletarian, and, as such, is a slave in society, whose interests demands that he should help to abolish Capitalism.

### THE POSITION OF THE PROLETARIAN.

Now a proletarian is one who possesses nothing but the power to labour and who, in order to live, sells that power to those who own and control the means of production and distribution, that is to the Capitalists. As his power to labour is bound up in, and cannot exist apart from, his physical being, he sells himself by the day, the week, month or whatever period is arranged. In the form of wages (called by some income) he receives just sufficient to maintain himself at the standard of life common to his group. Competition for jobs ensures that he shall not be able to demand more except for a limited period. The wage he receives includes not only his own cost of living but also the cost of rearing a family, of providing children to replace him in the mine, the workshop or office after he has gone, for to-day the family is still the unit of society generally, and calculations of maintenance costs are made with reference to it, not to the individual. If a worker remains single, or limits his family, he may make slight improvements in his own condition but, as will be shown later, these are of small account and in any event their value can only be estimated after setting off against them the sacrifices involved.

This is the position of economic dependence in which the working class finds itself, but while the people who fancy they are the "middle class" would probably admit this as a correct description of the position of the other workers they do not recognise its application to themselves. But wherein does their position differ? Consider the shop-keeper. He regards himself as independent, yet he is usually as much bound as any employee. If he is a confectioner, for instance, he is, in effect, the employee of the producers, Cadburys, Rowntrees, etc., just as much as if he were a labourer in one of their factories. He sells their products at their prices, and is dependent on their continuing to supply him with goods and on working himself in the selling of them for his living. He is merely a kind of commercial traveller, and, like him, is immediately affected by any worsening of working class life through unemployment,

lowered wages, etc. The publican, whose independence is even more illusory, is particularly dependent on the brewery company on the one hand and the condition of the labour market on the other. Lower wages mean less business.

It is true that there are some workers who also enjoy dividends from relatively small investments, but this does not alter their position in society, although it may colour their outlook on social questions. The fundamental question is whether the individual is or is not compelled to sell his labour power in order to live. If he is *compelled* to sell his services, then his position is that of the worker who must work or suffer privation, not that of the Capitalist who is able to please himself, and who may, in order to escape the boredom of doing nothing, add to his income by taking employment.

The fact that money wages vary does not relieve the better paid worker from the same compulsion that presses on the lower paid. Use makes it just as urgent a problem for him to maintain the standard he has been in the habit of enjoying, although there may be a wide margin between it and the bare physical minimum which will keep him alive and well. In passing, it may be mentioned that the tendency is for the variations between the different grades of workers to become less with increasing competition for employment. The simplification of labour processes, consequent on the introduction of improved machines and their standardisation, makes it easier for labour to be trained for any kind of employment, and this levels out wages.

The members of the so-called "middle class," to the degree that they are really better off than other workers, therefore have just the same interest in destroying the evils consequent upon the wages system.

As for the suggestion that the "middle class" are distinguished from the workers in being owners of property, statistics will show how much exaggerated the claim is.

### WHO OWNS THE PROPERTY.

According to the 64th Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, the total number of incomes exceeding £500 per annum was only 563,000 in the year 1919-1920, the last year for which figures are available. When it is remembered that there are more than 20 million persons in

this country entitled to vote, and that this excludes males under 21 and females under 30, it will be seen how small a proportion of the population is in receipt of such an income, even after allowing for those who are dependents. Obviously, in view of this, the opportunity to accumulate property is limited to but a small part of society. The following figures taken from the report of the Coal Industry Commission (Vol. 3, Appendix 66) afford some idea of the wages actually paid to those who fancy themselves in a superior position. The figures relate to 57% of the collieries in this country, and as the return was not compulsory, the probability is that only the better paying companies gave any information.

Salary (including bonus and value of house and coal)	No. of Managers.	1913.	1919.
£100 or less per annum ...	4	2	
£101—£200 ...	134	3	
£201—£300 ...	280	29	
£301—£400 ...	161	251	
£401—£500 ...	321	213	
£501—£600 ...	57	146	
£601 and over ...	50	152	

Prices had, of course, risen in 1919 nearly 200% over the 1913 level.

Again, only 27 persons out of every 1,000 pay Death Duties. In other words, only 2.7% of the population leaves over £300: while at a recent dinner given to the Chilean Minister the guests who numbered a mere 150 were worth between them £200 million (*Daily Sketch*). The property of the "middle class" and their ability to save, are, like those of the rest of the wage-earners, largely mythical. In 1922 there were 11,733,564 depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank, their total deposits being £268,143,235 or an average of £22 16s. 1d. each. The average for 6,298,376 of them was the grand sum of 1/10. (*Statistical Abstract for United Kingdom, 1908—1922*).

And in any event these savings are for the most part the provision made for the education and upbringing of children, for sickness, accident and old age, and therefore do not represent a surplus at all. They are merely part of the cost of maintenance of the worker. The low standard wage earner does not have to make provision for all these things, or else he does it in some other way. It is interesting to notice the opinion recently expressed by Lord Dawson of Penn on the "need for extended sickness

insurance" for the "middle class" who, he said, were excluded from the Medical Insurance Act which provided for the manual workers, and who were to be distinguished from the rich, "who could provide for themselves" (*Daily Herald*, 18th November). The manual workers are provided by the State or by some other public body with education for his children sufficient to fit them for the work they are expected to perform; with hospital treatment; old age pensions and the dole. Above a certain level of income allowance is made in the wages paid for the satisfaction of these needs, which below that level are publicly provided. A.L.T.

(To be continued.)

### A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

(Continued from December issue.)

It will be noted that in this sketch we have taken a few examples from past history to show how our theory of historical development fits the facts. But it equally applies to the history of our own times. For, manifold though the changes are that economic development has brought into being, the foundation of human society is still an economic one; only man's way of dealing with the fact has changed. The production and distribution of wealth is still of primary importance to human society. Hence the changes that have occurred in recent years in the means of wealth production and distribution can be said to be the underlying cause of many modern historical events. The late European War is one outstanding example. Unlike the small, self-supporting nations of feudal times, the leading nations of to-day are more or less politically and economically interwoven with each other. Particularly all countries are more economically interdependent than, say, a hundred years ago. Thus a general economic development in one country will make its effects felt nearly the world over. So vast had been the economic development of Germany from the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, up to a few years prior to 1914, that the German ruling class becoming a standing menace to the interests of the ruling class of this and other countries. The war was the direct outcome. Of course, the usual "lofty ideals"

were paraded by the rival groups of capitalists as one means of urging the workers on to the slaughter. But whilst Great Britain entered the war on the plea of "the defence of small nations," the real reason for her entry was the desire to crush a serious commercial rival, and thus retain for herself a large control of the world's markets. And similar motives actuated all the countries who participated in that "holiest of holy wars." That the underlying cause of the war was an economic one, and not the so-called racial differences as was said during the war is now more or less openly admitted by all. In conclusion, Some years ago Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue, in explaining the "Historical Method of Marx," well said, that in formulating that method Marx had placed at our disposal a "tool," "an instrument of research." The need for the use of that tool still awaits recognition by the great bulk of the working class, for it is in the hands of the workers that it will prove most useful for the progress of human society. In other words, besides being an instrument of historical research it is an instrument of their emancipation from wage slavery. Besides providing them with the understanding of the rise of mankind from their low beginnings in savagery up to our own civilisation, the rise of class society, slavery and the State, our view of historical development provides an understanding of the basis and movement of modern society. The conditions engendered in capitalist society already indicate the form of the society of the future. Social ownership and control of the resources of wealth production and distribution is pointed to as the next stage in social evolution. Let the workers then grasp a knowledge of the materialist conception of history. They will then use that knowledge in harmony with that economic development that has, in the main, made possible their freedom from capitalist domination. They will change the form of society in harmony with their requirements by establishing Socialism. With that accomplished the economic forces of society "which have hitherto ruled man" will become more and more consciously under the control of mankind. "Only from that time," says Engels, "will man himself more and more consciously make his own history—only from that time will the

social causes set in movement by him have in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom."

R. REYNOLDS.

(Conclusion.)

### MORE TRADE—LESS WORK.

All the Conservative papers during the General Election made great play of the increase in unemployment during the last ten months. Now the papers are full of figures showing that imports and exports have largely increased in the same ten months compared to the similar ten months of last year. What better proof is required of the falsity of Ramsay MacDonald's claim that the way to reduce unemployment is to develop world trade. Trade may be greatly increased, but if more economies and labour saving methods are used in production the increase in trade can actually be carried on by fewer employees.

The wider use of labour-displacing methods since the war and the growing number of combines and trusts are facts which make the cry of "More Trade" mean nothing to the unemployed.

K.

### "SOCIALISM AND RELIGION."

The Socialist Educational Society of New York have, by permission of the S.P.G.B., reprinted the above pamphlet. The S.P.G.B. are the sole agents for the pamphlet in this country, and copies can be obtained from Head Office at 5d. each, postage 1d. extra. Special terms for quantities.

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**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 12, High Cross road, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## THE REAL RUSSIA ITS PRESENT POSITION AND TENDENCIES.

*After Lenin*, by MICHAEL FARBMAN. 280 pages. 7/6. Published by Leonard Parsons, 24, Devonshire Street, W.C.1.

Michael Farbman sets out to tell the story of Russia since the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921. In doing so he gives us not only a clear and absorbing account of the chief existing economic and political features, together with many glimpses into the future as he anticipates it, but also a useful brief analysis of the forces which have moulded the present out of the pre-war Russian State.

He is amazed at the almost universal failure in this country to understand what is going on in Russia, and he ascribes it largely to the fact that the continuity in office of the persons and the party made prominent in 1917—the Bolsheviks—has quite hidden from view the radical changes in policy that have taken place. Confusion is deepened by the habit of continuing to use revolutionary phrases long after they have been robbed of all meaning by changing circumstances.

There is a new and stable Russia, but it is not by any means the one desired by the Bolsheviks, although, to a superficial view, they dominate the situation. Looking below the surface, Mr. Farbman concludes that "the important point to grasp . . . is the fact that a new ruling class is being evolved" (15) and the real power of the Bolsheviks comes from the circumstance that they saw this "new ruling class emerging in Russia and were astute enough to manœuvre themselves into the position of its leaders" (23). They have held that

position by making a series of far-reaching concessions to the peasants, and in Mr. Farbman's view they will continue to govern and make concessions, until divergent interests, crystallising in distinct political parties, break up the apparent unity of the Russian Communist Party which has been so far the only, albeit a very restricted medium for the expression of political opinions.

The overwhelming force which made possible the overthrow of Czarism was the determination of the peasants to have land. In the 40 years following 1861, the date of their "emancipation" from serfdom, the number of peasants rose from 45 to 85 million, while over the same period the area of land used by them increased by only one-fifth. The average holding fell in size by nearly one half, and the result was semi-starvation for millions. "Seventy per cent. had not enough fodder for their cattle and produced only the subsistence minimum for themselves" (180). Changing conditions and improved agricultural methods made life still harder for the great majority. After a period of stagnation Russian agriculture in the nineties began to revive—for the landowners—owing to increased foreign demand and higher prices for grain. For the peasants this merely aggravated an already barely tolerable situation by making it harder still for them to rent land. It was now more profitable for the owners to have their land cultivated for themselves by hired labour.

The discontent of the poorer peasants and landless labourers found an outlet during

the attempted revolution of 1905 in their endeavour to drive the land-owning nobility off the land by the deliberate destruction of their houses, agricultural machinery, etc. After 1905, Stolypin's reforms, by assisting the break-up of the village organisation, the Mir, helped the wealthier peasants to buy the land of the poorer, and thus destroyed peasant solidarity against the landowners. Yet discontent grew and received its magnificent opportunity in the breakdown caused by the war. Even before the Bolsheviks seized power the great estates were being taken forcibly and divided up. It was the peasants who carried the Bolsheviks into office, but when once the land was theirs and their position on it reasonably secure, they had no further concern with plans for social revolution. Mr. Farbman records the surprise felt by himself and other observers at the remarkable political insight shown by the seemingly dull peasants. They fought loyally and tenaciously with the Bolsheviks in defence of their land against Monarchist counter-revolutionaries; and when the same Bolshevik government tried to seize their surplus produce in order to feed the towns, the peasants resisted, arms in hand, with equal tenacity. They stringently curtailed production and brought Lenin and his party to unconditional surrender; also incidentally this curtailment was a big factor in multiplying the hardships of the famine. The result of their victory—the New Economic Policy—was that they gained the right to sell their produce freely in the market.

In legal theory the land is national property, but in truth the peasant occupier has security of tenure and in effect the land he occupies is his. The law forbids him to sell his holding, but allows him to lease it out, and Mr. Farbman confidently predicts that improvements in agricultural organisation and technique will be accompanied by growing inequality in the villages. A class of wealthy peasants accumulating larger and larger holdings will be faced by a class of landless rural labourers. In passing, it is worth noticing that a feature of village life unwisely relied upon and exaggerated by Lenin—the antagonism between rich and poor peasants—was brought to an end by the seizure of the land, for the effect was to equalise all holdings. This immediately robbed the Bolsheviks of much of their active support in rural areas.

Other developments equally obnoxious to the Communists have been going on in the towns. Despite their decrees, their propaganda and their state services, the Bolsheviks have been quite unable to check the growth of a powerful capitalist trading class, the state enterprises being helpless in face of the competition of more adaptable private traders.

Mr. Farbman quotes official figures, and goes on to say: These figures "show that even in the wholesale trade private enterprise enters into such serious competition with the State that it has nearly as many shops as the State. They demonstrate further that 92 per cent. of the retail trade is in the hands of private persons, and, what is of gravest importance, they show that from that area in which the masses make their purchases—the market-places—the State-controlled trade is completely absent. In the villages the situation of State trade is still less favourable. Here State shops are practically unknown and even co-operative shops are only 14.6 per cent. of all shops. If we compare State and private trade from the point of view of their respective turnover, we find that 64 per cent. of the entire turnover in the cities is made by private traders . . . the main struggle is being waged, and will continue to be waged, in the important sphere of retail trade. Yet the success already achieved by private capital in the wholesale trade is very remarkable. In the beginning of 1923 the proportion of private capital in this branch of trade was only 10 per cent. By the end of the year it reached 30 per cent" (page 135).

The growing power of this trading class cannot be ignored by those who would govern Russia, and will in due course lead to a great struggle for political control. Another battle-ground is provided by the disabilities imposed on the peasants by the present State control of foreign trade. The value of agricultural produce measured in pre-war prices is 4.7 times as great as the value of industrial produce. Yet agricultural produce obtains in the market only 2.3 times the price obtained for the produce of industry. The remedy for the peasant is the unfettered right to sell his corn in the dearest market and to buy what he requires in the cheapest market, at home and abroad. The issue will be Free Trade versus State control, and the victory of the

peasants will mean the destruction of what has been called by the Bolsheviks one of the three pillars of the Soviet State. Of the administration itself Lenin is reported to have said a few months before his death that the new bureaucratic machine was "adopted from Tzarism and only slightly anointed with Soviet oil" (page 6).

Mr. Farbman also sketches the leading figures in the Communist Party; describes the economic crisis of 1923 which foreshadowed the coming clash between agricultural and industrial interests; and gives an account of the successful attempt to stabilise the new currency. Other features we must leave, except to mention that the Trade Union movement has become (as must, of course, happen where the leading party is also the Government and hence the employer in State industries) a great organisation to prevent the workers from striking not only in State but also in private concerns (chap. viii).

While Mr. Farbman has, and deserves, a reputation for careful and unbiased observation, protest must be made against his carelessly inaccurate treatment and curt dismissal of Marx.

On page 34 he tells us that "When Lenin inaugurated the dictatorship of the proletariat he was obviously unhampered by the slightest doubt as to the efficacy of Marxian principles, but the longer he tested them as a practical revolutionist and statesman, the more he became aware of the impossibility of building up a society on a mechanical and exclusively economic basis. When he had to adopt an agrarian policy totally at variance with his Marxian opinions, and when later he was compelled to make an appeal to the peasants' acquisitive instincts and go back to what he styled 'State Capitalism,' he was not only conscious that something was wrong with his Marxian gospel, but frankly admitted that Marx had not foreseen all the realities of a complex situation. The greatest value of the Russian Revolution to the world labour movement lies in the fact that it has replaced Marxism by Leninism."

Apart from some obscurities in the above passage, the plain suggestion is that Marx had envisaged the possibility of establishing socialism without socialists; of initiating a proletarian revolution in a country where 80 per cent. of the population were non-proletarian peasants; and of building

socialist society in the most backward country in Europe. Lenin, says Mr. Farbman, tried to apply this theory, found it failed, and rejected it. The fact of the matter is that this whole conception (as has repeatedly been shown in the *Socialist Standard*) is utterly foreign to Marxism, and Lenin has produced no material evidence to prove the contrary. Indeed Mr. Farbman and those like the *Daily Herald*, who have so gleefully reproduced his opinion, make no attempt to do so. They are wise, for there is no such evidence.

Moreover, Mr. Farbman himself supplies proof that Lenin was not, and could not, have been sent astray by following Marx in this matter. He writes this (page 96):—

"The most constant charge made against Lenin and his associates is that, contrary to the teachings of their own Marxian Sociology, which told them that Communism could only arise as a result of the most highly developed capitalism, they deliberately proceeded to precipitate this in a country predominantly agricultural and containing only the rudiments of capitalist development. But an examination of Lenin's struggle for State Capitalism against his Left Communist associates in the spring of 1918 will show conclusively that Lenin worked his hardest to extricate his party from the fatal policy of indiscriminate nationalisation to which they were committed. . . . As a Socialist theorist Lenin had no manner of doubt that Communism was bound first to arrive in the highly developed countries of the West—England and Germany—and in America. He never made the mistake so commonly attributed to him of imagining that so backward a country as Russia was ripe and ready for Communism."

Mr. Farbman here seems to be flatly contradicting his previous statement that Lenin went astray and had to "go back to State Capitalism." But whether Mr. Farbman thinks that Lenin erred or not, it is perfectly plain that Mr. Farbman, and in his opinion Lenin also, knew well that Marx could not be regarded as an advocate of attempting to establish Communism in backward Russia. If Lenin did at any time believe that this was possible, he held that belief not only in defiance of Marxian principles, but also as a departure from his own view at the time of his return to Russia in 1917.

Mr. Farbman further quotes from a letter addressed in 1917 to the Swiss workers (page 98):—

"... the idea that the Russian proletariat is the chosen Revolutionary Proletariat among the workers of Europe is absolutely alien to us. We are fully aware that the proletariat of Russia is less organised, less prepared and less conscious than the workers of other countries. It was the peculiar historical conditions and not the peculiar qualities of the Russian proletariat which made it for a certain period, and probably for a very short one, the advanced guard of the Revolutionary Proletariat of the world. Russia is a peasant country and one of the most backward of European countries. Socialism cannot win at once in Russia. Yet the peasant character of the country may, in view of the experience of 1905, give to the bourgeois democratic revolution of Russia such a swing as may make it a prologue to the World Socialist Revolution."

Mr. Farbman provides the key to the situation when he writes: "I, personally, think that there was one cardinal error into which Lenin fell, and that was his ardent belief in the imminence of a World Socialist Revolution" (page 97).

As the Socialist Party of Great Britain continually pointed out both before and after the Bolshevik seizure of power, the German, British and other workers were never for one moment able or willing to fight, work or even vote for Socialism. It was a tragedy that Lenin should have listened to those emotional babblers who mistook their hopeful imaginings for facts, and created the colossal myth of a revolutionary working class in England, Germany and America. It is a tribute to Lenin, amply supported by Mr. Farbman, that he was able to face the unpleasant truth before it was too late, and instead of concentrating entirely on futile schemes for world revolution, was willing to lay his hand to the task of hastening the industrial development of Russia under a system of State Capitalism, modified in favour of the workers to the extent that that is possible. H.

#### NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

### SOCIALISM AND THE SO-CALLED "MIDDLE CLASS."

(Continued from January issue.)

The property holdings of the "middle class," unlike those of the capitalist, do not free their possessors from worry, and do not give them command over the lives and destinies of other men. They represent deductions from present income for future needs; they are therefore not capital in the sense of being "wealth used for the purpose of gain" (the definition of capital used by a Conservative, Sir William Ashley), the receipt of a return on them being only incidental, and not the object of their existence. Unlike Topsy, they have not "just growed." On the contrary, these reserves, for the future of themselves and their children, can only be accumulated by deliberate and self-denying effort. Failure to make such saving against the future is followed by a fall to a lower level of life, either in this or the succeeding generation. The effort to retain their "nest egg" occupies so large a part of their lives that it becomes the basis of the political philosophy of the more highly paid workers, and, like the bird in the Mediaeval romance, they are so busy sitting tight on their eggs so that they shall not be stolen, that they do not see they are being robbed by the opening of the nest from below. To secure their savings from "predatory Socialists" who are supposed to have raiding designs on their women and children, they hitch their wagon to capitalism. But what security does capitalism offer even for their savings?

Savings can be held in one of the following forms—in currency or in bank balances which represent claims to a definite amount of currency, in government bonds, or in titles to property of various kinds, such as title deeds of land, shares in industrial and commercial undertakings, etc. Of the two main kinds of shares, debentures represent a claim to a fixed annual interest and to repayment of a definite sum of money. Therefore debentures, government bonds, currency holdings, and bank balances can be lumped together as being holdings of money, and it follows that the value of these holdings depends on "the value" of money. But there is no guarantee under capitalism that the value of money measured in the commodities it will purchase for its possessor will remain constant, or even that

it will fluctuate only within narrow limits. Wherever there has been money economy there have been violent fluctuations. (For an example in the Ancient World, see Gibbons' "Decline and Fall," Chapter 11.) The recent happenings in Europe provide an instructive illustration of the lack of security in all currency holdings. In Germany the value of money has fallen to such a degree that the internal debt has been wiped out. In France pre-war holdings of Government Stock have lost seven-eighths of their real value; in Italy, eleven-twelfths; and in England, one half.

"Throughout the Continent pre-war savings of the middle class, so far as they were invested in bonds, mortgages, or bank deposits, have been largely or entirely wiped out" ("A Tract on Monetary Reform," J. M. Keynes, page 16).

Mr. Keynes adds: "What was deemed most secure has proved least so. He who neither spent nor 'speculated,' who made 'proper provision for his family,' who sang hymns to security and observed most straightly the morals of the edified, and the respectable injunctions of the worldly-wise—he, indeed, who gave fewer pledges to Fortune, has yet suffered her heaviest visitations" (page 17). And this lack of security proceeds not from natural causes such as make uncertain the life of the savage—that is, famines, plagues, earthquakes, floods, etc.—but from a defect in the organisation of society based as it is on money economy. If it be argued that these fluctuations were the product of war, which is an abnormal condition, it need only be pointed out that where there is production for profit there will be struggles for markets and raw materials, and where there is a clash of interests there is an ever-present danger of war. And, moreover, price fluctuations before the war were considerable over a period of years. Here it is sufficient to note (see Keynes) that between 1896 and 1914 the capital "value of the annuity of any investor in Consols fell by about one-third, and the purchasing power of his income from them by about the same amount." Consols are chosen as representing a class of investment free from ordinary speculative risks of trade, and therefore affording the best index to changes of the kind we are here concerned with.

There is, then, no permanent security in that class of savings which represent titles

to certain sums of money. Titles to land and ordinary shares remain to be dealt with. But, first, two possible criticisms must be anticipated.

#### ECONOMIC INSECURITY.

It may be objected that lack of security affects the capitalist as well as the small saver. It certainly does, but as all authorities admit, not nearly to the same extent. The capitalists as a class are not ruined by changes in the value of money, though some individual members may be. Their economic domination is not ended by fluctuating prices, any more than the subjection of the workers is lessened by either stable or changing prices. This is because capitalists hold goods, factories, mines, and commodities of all kinds, and not money, which is only a means to the obtaining of goods. To quote Keynes again: "Small savers have most to lose by currency depreciation" (page 66). But even if it were true that the capitalists are also insecure, this would not disprove our contention that capitalism fails to provide security for the "middle class," and it would be additional evidence of the decay of the system.

The other objection which might be raised is that there could never be complete security under any system. This is obviously true as regards natural catastrophes like plagues, crop failures, earthquakes, etc., whose effects we can at present not guard against entirely, but it has no bearing on the kind of insecurity which is an effect of capitalism and which can be removed with capitalism.

Now let us consider titles to land. This kind of "middle class" property needs little attention, because it hardly exists. Some own their own houses, and a few own other houses as well as the one in which they live. Those that are held on lease are not a form of permanent revenue, thus only freehold house property remains, and the capital and rental values of this are by no means certain. The decay of industry in a particular neighbourhood may completely destroy the value of house property in it. Even since the war, and in spite of the Rents Restriction Acts, there have been local falls of the value of house property, and before the war fluctuation in value of house property was notorious.

As for ordinary shares, they are a type of investment not in favour with those people now under discussion. They play for safety and avoid investing in industrial

shares whose fluctuations are so wide and unpredictable. Only the favoured few experienced persons "in the know" are aware of impending movements by which money can be made, and they are not members of the so-called "middle class," whose savings, moreover, are not large enough to be widely distributed so as to minimise the risk of loss. The recent happenings in Dunlops will serve to drive home our point. Adverse trading conditions resulting in a loss of ten and a half million pounds have involved the reduction of the ordinary £1 shares to 6s. 8d. each. Yet Dunlops was regarded as one of the safest companies in that trade. Crosse and Blackwell's, and Burberry's, other perfectly "safe" concerns, have had to carry through similar re-organisation schemes.

There is certainly no security for small property; is there any more security attaching to the employment of the "middle class"? The following London banks have collapsed since the war, and many of the staff are still looking for work, to be met always with the reply, even where vacancies need to be filled, younger men or boys will do:

Sir Robert McGrigors, Bart., and Sons; Hannevigs Bank Ltd.; Alliance Bank of Simla, Ltd.; Boulton Brothers. If it be said that these were not first-class firms, that objection cannot be raised against the Austrian Discount Bank, of Vienna, or against the Banco Disconto in Italy, or Alperin, Kisch, and Schiff, of New York—all of them first-class, old-established banks or banking companies which have recently failed. Shipping and insurance companies which have failed during the last few years and thrown thousands of men out of employment are too numerous to mention. Recall the affair of Bevan. He was a financier who gambled in a way that his kind do every day. But he was unlucky, and went to gaol, and an associated firm, the oldest-established stockbrokers in the City, was ruined. As a result, clerks of over forty years' service found themselves suddenly out of a job.

As Mr. R. Tawney puts it ("Acquisitive Society," page 204): The brain workers, like the manual workers, find that

"Their tenure of their posts is sometimes highly insecure. Their opportunities for promotion may be few and distributed with a singular capriciousness. They see the prizes of industry awarded by favouritism, or by the nepotism which results in the head of a business unloading upon

it a family of sons whom it would be economical to pay to keep out of it, and which, indignantly denounced on the rare occasions on which it occurs in the public service, is so much the rule in private industry that no one even questions its propriety."

Enough has been written to show that there is no section of the working class without its problem of unemployment, and that the problem is the same for the whole class without distinction of sex or colour of skin or working coat. The problem, moreover, is not one of mere numbers. To reduce the number, as the Labour Party and other capitalist quacks seek to do, does not solve the problem. It is an effect of the social system that it cannot provide its members with the opportunity to labour in support of themselves. The only guarantee the present system gives is that certain privileged members shall be able to live in sumptuous idleness on the backs of their fellows. They do this by exploiting those they employ, and the latter, if alive to their own interest, would end the system which is based on exploitation.

#### THE INEFFICIENCY OF CAPITALISM.

If the "middle class" are more foolish than the so-called manual workers, and instead of looking at social problems from the point of view of their own self-interest they wish to measure everything according to the standards set by the ruling class, they must still condemn the present system because it is grossly inefficient.

Is it efficient to have millions of workers seeking employment while the machinery of production is standing idle? Is it efficient to put checks on Nature because she yields too generously of her bounty? And yet this is what happens in the production of rubber, tea, jute, etc. Is it efficient to have trawlers dumping cargoes of fish into the sea in order to keep prices up? Is it efficient to fatten and pamper a select and useless few while half the people are on the verge of starvation? Is it efficient to be doing jobs which are not necessary for the ordering and use of society? Yet nearly the whole of the clerical profession are thus occupied. What need of insurance clerks in a world where risks are borne by society instead of by a special section with a view to making a profit. Solicitors' clerks, what need of them except to haggle over private property? Abolish money economy, and what a reserve of labour is made available for production from the ranks of the bank staffs. Which-

ever way you look at it, this system is rotten, inefficient, and destructive of the best potentialities in man. Social progress demands its overthrow, a task which only the working class can perform. The workers alone can break the chains that bind them, and replace a class system based on production for profit by a classless system producing for use. Chains are still chains though they are gilded, and the "middle class" being in reality merely a section of the workers, must join with the rest of their class in breaking those chains.

(Conclusion.) A. L. T.

#### REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

##### ANSWER TO G. T. FOSTER.

Your second letter takes us no further than your first one, and still consists of unsupported assertions.

Seeing, feeling, and other modes of consciousness, *apart from something* that sees, feels, or is conscious, is unthinkable to the human being. Your "Therefore" is thus totally unwarranted and illogical. Moreover, your sentence contains a fallacy. The brain is *apprehended* by the various modes of consciousness, but is clearly not *in* them. You make the usual mistake of the metaphysical idealist of confusing the *state* or mode of apprehension with the thing causing that state. Both Berkeley, hampered, it is true, by the limited knowledge of his time, and Bergson, with his empty, facile phrases, make the same blunder. This applies also to your last paragraph, for the "perceiving consciousness" is merely a mode of something having consciousness.

The answer to your question is now obvious. No one has ever known of a brain *in* anyone's mind, but only as something *apprehended* by a mind.

Equally baseless is your remark that mind "would have to be known by a knower, or be absolutely unknowable." Where is your evidence that it cannot "be known by a knower"? The metaphysicians you are so fond of continually use the word "self-conscious" or self-knowing; that is, according to your own definition, "the knower knowing." But all this chatter about things being "unknowable" is, as Dr. Maudsley sarcastically says, like "a bluebottle fly calling its extra-relational the unbuzzable."

Further contradiction appears in your

next paragraph, where you admit our experiences are knowledge. Then so far as our experience—personal and racial—goes, we *do* know. Every year—nay, every day, every hour—sees our experiences continually increasing. That is to say, our knowledge is continually increasing, and neither you nor anyone else can set a limit to the increase of experiences while human beings exist.

ED. COM.

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

##### HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

We are continuously asked why we don't publish new pamphlets or re-publish old ones that are out of print. Our answer has been to point to that ever-pressing problem of finance. A party like ours, depending upon its members for financial support and faced with the inevitable poverty of a working-class membership—our party is forced to curb its publishing activity within very narrow limits. Such a valuable and much-needed publication as our party pamphlet, "Socialism and Religion," is urgently required at a low price, and its re-publication in that form would find a ready sale. It would have been re-issued long ago had sufficient funds come in.

Amongst other publications very much needed we have in view a pamphlet on the Principles of Socialism. The enormous amount of rubbish printed in the name of Socialism in recent years, with its confusing effect on the workers' minds, makes the scientific and revolutionary pronouncements of The Socialist Party an urgent necessity. We have, therefore, opened a fund called "A New Publications Fund," which will be reserved for the purpose of new publications. We invite members and sympathisers immediately to send in donations marked for that fund. If you cannot afford much, send in the little you can. If the readers of the *Socialist Standard* who appreciate the soundness of our party position will hurry along their contributions to the fund, we can rapidly get to work.

We get letters of appreciation of our literature from all over the world. Here is your opportunity to put your appreciation into a postal order and send it along.

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

(NOTE.—Amounts already received will be acknowledged in March issue.)

## OFFICIAL NOTICE.

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable.

The meetings of the Executive Committee are held at the Head Office, every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.

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## The Socialist Standard,

FEBRUARY



1925

## THE SHAVING OF SHAW.

In the *Daily Herald* of November 8th, 1924, appeared a copy of a letter on the Russian question, written by G. Bernard Shaw for the Russian paper, *Izvestia*. This letter seems to have caught the fancy of the *Daily Herald*, as in a leading article next day it is described as a "brilliant analysis" of the Bolsheviks' position in Russia, and one alliterative phrase is quoted with great glee:—

"Wherever Socialism is a living force instead of a dead theory it has left Karl Marx as far behind as modern science has left Moses."

The toadying policy of the *Daily Herald* towards the leaders of the Labour Party is so well known that little notice need be taken of its comments. It is curious, however, that two critics of Mr. Shaw's letter, Mr. Longden, National Council of the I.L.P., and Mr. Max Beer, should have missed the double fallacy in the statement quoted.

What is meant by the phrase "a living force"? Shaw, as is usual with him, attempts no explanation. "A living force" may vary from zero to the point where it over-rides all other forces. In no case or place has Socialism reached the latter position. In every country where it is being advocated it is at present accepted and taught by a minority, and can, therefore, only exert any "force" indirectly through its influence upon the fears or hopes of the

ruling class, or of the majority. Without any exception, in every place where Socialism is seriously examined, criticised, or fought, it is always the teachings of Marx that are taken and dealt with by both supporters and opponents. Shaw in his propaganda is usually—though quite incorrectly—looked upon as a buffoon, except when he uses the Marxian case. In his debate with Professor Wicksteed, in the early eighties, he was only able to score by using Marx's economics. When addressing a meeting of the "Technical and Administrative Workers," at the Central Hall, Westminster, about two years ago, he gave Marx's analysis of capitalism and showed how the concentration of capital into a relatively few hands had rendered impossible the old notion of an individual starting in business and building up a fortune by "ability and hard work"! Neither the Fabian Society nor the "Independent" Labour Party, which Shaw claims as "the living centre of English Socialism" (italics ours—as though Socialism could be national!) can produce a single notion or proposal worthy of a moment's thought by the workers, without basing such proposal upon the teachings of Marx. Even the Catholic Mr. Wheatley, a late Cabinet Minister, is talking of and advocating the class war in his latter-day speeches.

Mr. Shaw's first fallacy is, of course, well known to all students of Socialism, including Mr. Shaw. His second fallacy, that the actions of the Communists in Russia are Marxian, or even a sensible deduction from Marx's teachings, has been exposed on several occasions in the columns of the *Socialist Standard*. This fallacy extends farther than Shaw, and is extremely useful to supporters of the capitalist class in their attempts to oppose and "refute" Marx. In two public lectures on Marxism, given at King's College, London University, in December, 1924, this was the line taken by the lecturer to show the "failure" of Marx's teachings.

On certain occasions Shaw will use Marx's works, without acknowledgment, but evidently feels uncomfortable in handling such advanced material. As his writings and actions during the war and at other times show, he does not care to keep pace with Marx, or even with Moses, but feels quite at home when he goes Back to Methuselah.

## THE ECONOMICS OF SOCIAL AMUSEMENT.

## PART II.

To-day, under the fully ripened rule of capitalist production, the public amusements are in close organic relation with existing social conditions, just as was the case in previous historical periods.

All the institutions of entertainment and recreation—including the public games, football, baseball, boxing, and horse racing—are thoroughly organised on a capitalist basis. They are owned and controlled by private property owners with no other object in the main than financial profit. To-day the professional player who once occupied but a minor rôle now covers practically the whole field. The great majority of the players both in the theatres and in the sports are wage-workers. Exploitation and oppression prevails in the production of our most thoroughly enjoyable entertainments just as in any other sphere of industry. The means of amusement have become largely standardised "factory products" and as dependent upon the fluctuations of supply and demand as any other commodities.

As in other industrial fields, science and machinery have been applied to the production of amusement, especially in the mechanical devices, rides and so on, of the Pleasure Park and in the cinema. The enormous growth and popularity of motion-pictures is one of the striking phenomena of our times. It has become of all forms of popular amusement the one peculiarly characteristic of the latest phase of industrialism. In the cinema industry, which is claimed as the third in point of size in the United States, vast quantities of capital have been invested. It is organised internationally and the market for its products is the whole world.

Summing up the above, then, we may say that the public amusements under capitalism have lost all trace of their once intimate connection with social tradition, with communal, religious, or political life. We no longer attend the dance, the games, or the theatre as a rite, as a religious duty, or as a social function. The bourgeoisie of to-day have their own strictly class amusements and relaxations, and these to some extent retain social, and even political, characteristics. But the great popular games and entertainments with which we

are here concerned are purely commercial in their methods and aims, and when an individual desires diversion and can pay for it he goes to the place where it is for sale and buys as much as he can afford or cares for.

Nevertheless, the social amusements occupy a place of greater prominence than possibly at any time in the past, and certainly they absorb the permanent labours of a far larger proportion of the population and cater for an immensely greater audience. The primary organisations for amusement are now permanent instead of being temporary and periodic. Every large city has its scores, its hundreds, or its thousands of theatres and cinema-houses—many open every day in the year. Here, then, is proof that, in spite of having shed their traditional character, these institutions draw their vitality from some deep social necessity and are a response to an insistent social demand.

Let us consider the manner of life of the masses of the people in modern communities. The great majority are workers engaged in the production and distribution of wealth. Destitute of property, they sell their natural energy to the owners of capital. They have no control over their labour and no interest in its product. The peasant, even when a tenant, has an interest in the land and its products that is unknown to the industrial worker. In the highly organised spheres of production the labour of the workers is machine-regulated to a degree of monotony never before known. The machine has ousted the craftsman, so that the "joy of workmanship" exists to-day only as a rare and curious survival. The typical worker in the most technically developed industries is the machine-feeder—the man at the power-press, punching holes in a metal sheet—all exactly alike—so many per minute—all day—for hundreds of days.

Even outside the workshop, the worker's life is a monotonous routine. Home-life and comfort is more of an ideal than a fact. Living in the ugly congested areas of the great cities, he has little opportunity for healthy exercise in the open or of invigorating contact with the glory of beauty of Nature. His poverty will not allow him any really elevating luxuries, and the continuous round of exhausting and degrading toil leaves him with neither the energy nor the desire for self-education or for artistic

or scientific pursuits. His life is like a narrow groove running in a perpetual circle; habit and ignorance make him fearful of changing the groove, and even when he does so he discovers that in general all the circles open to him are very much alike. Moreover, he cannot afford to take chances—he may have a family dependent on his regular wage, and in any case the prospect of unemployment is no enviable one. Occasionally, here and there a worker kicks, succeeds in breaking the circle and achieves a precarious life of greater freedom, excitement and variety as a tramp or a criminal; but the ideal of the mass of the workers necessarily is—a permanent or “steady” job, which almost inevitably spells inescapable monotony.

But this is not all. The lives of the toilers have always been narrow, drab, and monotonous. But to the slave or the serf, and even the peasant of our own day, the world itself was a relatively small place, often not much larger than the village or district in which he lived.

To-day, however, the whole world has been knit together by commerce and communications, and the horizon of knowledge has been enormously extended to include every land and every race and nation. Modern literature opens up for the reader the whole world, and describes—if only superficially—every part of the earth, every class in society, and every period of the past. Even the penny newspaper brings us news from “the ends of the earth.”

By contrast, then, with what the imagination can offer, the real everyday life of the mass of the population to-day appears vastly meaner, duller, and narrower than ever it did in the past. The imagination has been stimulated, and a yearning for variety, beauty, colour, and excitement produced which in real life can find no outlet, no satisfaction. Hence the widespread efforts to escape from reality into the boundless world of fiction and romance, and hence the enormous consumption of romantic literature and the fascination of millions by the “movies.” Naturally, it is the adolescent and young people who are primarily affected—youth is the period of romantic visions, but there are no restrictions of age in the drawing power of the cinema. Once the habit of seeking emotional stimulus in the “movies” has become rooted, it becomes almost a necessity of existence, as anyone

can discover by a few minutes’ conversation with a “movie-fiend.”

Doubtless the thirst for thrills and the desire to escape from deadening reality is as readily satisfied by the stage-drama and the novel, but the motion-picture has peculiarities that make it well fitted to be the most popular vehicle to this end. It tells its story in visual pictures instead of verbal description, it can be exceedingly vivid and convincing, and it is cheap and easily accessible. The cinema demands less mental energy than reading, requires less imagination than the drama, and calls for only a small amount of intelligence. It is therefore eminently adapted to the recreational and imaginative needs of a population starved of beauty and intellectually stunted by over-work and mal-education.

The cinema has thus become the popular entertainment of capitalism *par excellence*. Its development is so immense that it even threatens the regular theatre with near extinction. Its audience is the most gigantic in the world’s history. Its statistics are almost incredible. In 1920 the estimated number of picture-theatres in the United States was 17,000, and the daily attendance ten millions. The figures for the British Isles in the same year were 5,000 picture-theatres with an average daily attendance of six millions—the attendance having almost doubled in three years. As far back as 1917, the attendance for the year in the British Isles was well over one thousand millions (“Ency. Britt., new vol. 30).

The social influence of the cinema, and its value in direct propaganda, is immense. In its indirect influence in fostering and inculcating all the mental habits and moral ideals of the bourgeoisie, in cultivating a worship of wealth and luxury, and an unthinking response to nationalist sentiment, its effect upon the minds of the workers is pernicious in the extreme, doing much to blind them to the fundamental cause of the very drudgery, degradation, and meanness of life which impels them to seek oblivion and stimulation in the glamour of the film.

We shall not here discuss the artistic level and possibilities of the cinema. It is sometimes claimed that it has a brilliant artistic future, and this may be so. One thing, however, must be insisted upon, and that is, that the admittedly low artistic standard of the majority of moving-pictures is due first to the low intellectual development of

the vast masses of wage-slaves who form their audience, and secondly to the necessity of hiding from this audience the truth about social life. It is not due to the incapacity of this producer or that—the producers are business-men first and “artists” a long way afterwards, and—“what pays goes.”

In conclusion: may we hope for a healthier, more artistic, and more intelligent standard of popular entertainment in the future? The answer is plain. So long as the mass of the people have to endure arduous, monotonous toil and poverty, so long will the present widespread craving for thrills and illusion continue. Existing conditions of labour leave the average workers mentally and physically exhausted and with neither time nor inclination for intellectual or cultural development. While these conditions remain, the prevailing popular forms of diversion will be those which readily stimulate the crudest emotions by the most obvious means and make little call upon the intellect.

While, therefore, it is quite likely that, with the growing revolt against capitalism, a small but increasing section of the population will demand and receive a higher standard of recreation and of dramatic art—such a section of course exists to-day—until capitalism is destroyed, things will remain much as they are or, possibly, for a time, even become worse.

With the re-organisation of society on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, and the consequent disappearance of slavery and drudgery, will come a rebirth of the real spirit of association and conscious co-operation that capitalism has done so much to destroy. Public recreations will become again truly social, and they will be the vivid expression of the joy in life and the fellowship of free and equal men and women. A wider and nobler education will make possible the utilisation of an abundant and increasing leisure to understand and enjoy the titanic, wonderful drama of the universe in which we live. Artificial and hectic amusements and exaggerated melodrama will no longer be necessary in order to make us forget the meanness and narrowness of our lives. Only that art will flourish that genuinely represents the unfettered response of the human mind to the beauty, the wonder, and the tragedy of the Universe and Life.

(Conclusion.)

R. W. HOU'SLEY.

## LANSBURY AND THE “DAILY HERALD.”

### A FORGOTTEN INCIDENT.

We see from the *Daily Herald* of January 19th, that Mr. George Lansbury is publishing a history of the *Herald*. Lest Mr. Lansbury should omit to record the treatment meted out to Charles Lapworth, a former Editor, for the offence of assuming that the duty of a workers’ paper is to fight for the working class, we reprint the letter Lapworth wrote when his connection with the *Herald* came to an end. A lesson is also to be learned about the futility of trying to build up a workers’ movement except on the basis of solid understanding. The wealthy and “disinterested” friends are likely to prove disappointing supports in time of trouble. Those who pay the piper call the tune!

Lapworth’s letter appeared in the *New Age* on December 18th, 1923, after the *Herald* had refused to publish it!

\* \* \*

“*Daily Herald*” and Chas. Lapworth.  
A letter from Chas. Lapworth to the “*New Age*” (18/12/1913).

Sir,

I sent the enclosed statement to the *Daily Herald*. The management declined to publish it. Will you be good enough to give it a space in the *New Age*?

(Signed) CHAS. LAPWORTH.

“*Why I Left the ‘Daily Herald.’*”

After a fortnight’s delay, an announcement has been made in the *Daily Herald* of the fact that Mr. G. Lansbury has been appointed Editor in my place and it has been necessary to say that “there will be no change of policy.” I think it is due to these enquiries, and certainly in view of events subsequent to what I am about to relate, it is due to me personally that my explanation of what happened should be published. The notice in to-day’s “paper” states merely that I had resigned, and many may wonder why I should desert my post at such a crisis in the industrial war as the week before the “Dublin Conference.” The statement, if it had given the full truth, would have said “that I had been forced out of the editorship against my will.” Most readers know something of the romantic career of our little paper, and will remember that in June last the “*Daily Herald Co.*” was forced into liquidation

through no fault of its own. "The Limit Printing and Publishing Co." was then formed, consisting of Mr. G. Lansbury and myself, and we acquired the paper. By this time the expenditure had been cut down to £500 per week, as against £1,100 per week of a year previous, and the weekly loss reduced to about £200 per week, which several anonymous rich friends of Mr. G. Lansbury agreed to make good. Later Mr. Francis Meynell, as representing these friends, was added to the Board of Directors, making the maximum of three allowed by the "Articles of Association." The only other shareholder besides the Directors is Mr. Robert Williams.

Mr. Lansbury is Chairman and I am Secretary of the Company. On Sunday, December 1st, 1913, I received a summons to a meeting of the Company, signed by Mr. G. Lansbury and called for the following Monday morning. Mr. Lansbury, Mr. Meynell, and myself were present, and the meeting was opened by the Chairman without any preamble addressing me: "We have come to ask you to resign the Editorship. Either you go out or I shall refuse to have anything more to do with the paper." And he went on to say that he must refuse to enter into any argument or give any other reason than that there was a fundamental difference between his own frame of mind, his own outlook and mine, which difference made the position absolutely hopeless so far as the future of the paper was concerned. Naturally, I urged that, even admitting this "fundamental difference," it was not serious enough ground for me to resign my position, and that with all respect I must ask for something more specific. Placing a copy of the *Daily Herald* on the table, I said that was what the staff and myself stood for, obviously, or we would not have been working as conscientious journalists, and that being so, the request for my resignation necessarily implied a departure in policy. Mr. Lansbury denied that it did. I answered that a mere negative did not help me to understand, and I asked for particular criticism of the conduct of the paper. The Chairman objected to what he called my cross-examination of himself, but conceded that as I have been honest and conscientious in my editorial work, I was only doing the right thing from my point of view in fighting for the *status quo*. He also agreed

there was no personal feeling in the matter, but we disagreed about a principle. Mr. Lansbury repeated that so far as he was concerned the position was hopeless if I remained Editor. I pressed for reasons. Mr. Meynell then proffered this: "We want the paper to represent Mr. Lansbury's ideas, and we propose that Mr. Lansbury be Editor." I suggested that the change of Editor and mention of "ideas," seeing that Mr. Lansbury had stated his ideas coincided with mine, did warrant my assumption that change of policy was intended. To which Mr. Meynell replied: "We are against the gospel of hatred you preach." I pointed out that the paper stood for the class war, without modification, and Mr. Lansbury interposed that "it would continue to stand for the class war, but not class hatred and attacks on persons of another class." Hatred of conditions, by all means, but not of persons," I think were his words, and Mr. Meynell said something about the absence of the spirit of brotherhood in the paper. Incidentally Mr. Lansbury strongly condemned some public remark of Wm. D. Heywood about middle-class people. Readers will have to put their own construction on the foregoing. My construction was that the paper was to be allowed to retain its "kick," but that it was to have a feather bed tied round its foot. Both Mr. Meynell and Mr. G. Lansbury insisted that their complaint was against the tone and not the policy of the paper. Mr. Meynell said that almost every day his father or somebody else complained of something offensive. My reply was that the *Daily Herald* was not written for rich people, but by workers for workers, and so far the latter had not made manifest any objection to the tone. In response to further pressure, I got one or two items mentioned about which there was complaint. It is hardly believable, but I, Editor of a militant working-class paper, was taken to task for uncomplimentary reference to a duchess, to a bishop, to a prominent Fabian, and for a cartoon of a certain Labour Member of Parliament.

Prior to this particular meeting, complaint had been made about neglect of the woman's movement and "Too much Dublin." In reference to this, I contended that it was not fair to blame the paper for the past few months' apparent slump in militant suffrage methods, and that if my

editorial judgment was wrong in attributing to Dublin the greatest importance in the industrial war, then I must certainly accept the blame for devoting to it so much of our eight small pages. Finally I said I had diligently assembled all the—to me—little molehills to which exception had been taken, and for the life of me I could not build a big enough mountain of reason why I should desert my post, and I refused to resign. Mr. Meynell then moved: "That Mr. G. Lansbury be Editor in place of Mr. Lapworth." I voted against the proposition. Mr. Lansbury as Chairman used his casting vote and declared himself appointed Editor. Subsequently, as a graceful concession to Mr. Lansbury, I formally resigned and duly entered on the minute book the new Editor, and that was all, except—at the evident desire of Mr. Lansbury—I left the office at once. I also proffered the undertaking that I would not speak to any of the staff, who would naturally want some explanation of the extraordinary turn of events, until Mr. Lansbury had had an opportunity of giving his own explanation.

Mr. Lansbury objected to me taking notes of the discussion, but I think I have reported fairly correctly what took place. Mr. Lansbury also intimated that he would allow no discussion in the *Daily Herald*, so I don't know whether this statement will be permitted to appear in the paper, which has hitherto made a boast of its "free and open platform," but it is in view of events subsequent to the above meeting that I am obliged to press for publication.

I have since been criticised for allowing myself to be forced out of the Editorship. My answer is that the proposition came upon me so suddenly that it did not occur to me that I could alone shoulder the responsibility of stopping the £200 a week subsidy, as I was made to feel was inevitable if I proved obdurate. The money had always been put up solely on account of Mr. Lansbury's personality, and his withdrawal meant the withdrawal of the cash.

(Signed) CHAS. LAPWORTH.

December 12th, 1913.

(Italics ours.—Ed. Com., "S.S.")

### "SOCIALISM AND RELIGION."

The Socialist Educational Society of New York have, by permission of the S.P.G.B., reprinted the above pamphlet. The S.P.G.B. are the sole agents for the pamphlet in this country, and copies can be obtained from Head Office at 5d. each, postage 1d. extra. Special terms for quantities.

### WAGES AND THE COST OF LIVING.

If the cost of living to the workers fell to the level of a few shillings per week, wages would be quickly reduced to a level which left them little or no margin after satisfying their wants each week.

This is due to the fact that labour power is a commodity, the price of which is determined by its cost of production. All commodities are subject to this law. There may be temporary fluctuations in the price of a commodity due to variations in supply and demand; but these compensate one another in the long run, and a mean level can be traced through the ups and downs which is the actual cost of production.

Wages fluctuate because they are the price of a commodity. The demand for labour power, however, is seldom in excess of the supply; consequently wages for any particular form of labour power are rarely above the cost of production for that form. Striking an average and taking the more highly-paid with the lowest, we say the cost of production of labour power is synonymous with the cost of living.

As there are always more workers than jobs, competition for them is so keen that wages can always be kept down to a point which, for the bulk of workers, represents a meagre portion of the necessities of life. It therefore seems to them, that if the cost of necessities were lower their lot would be improved. The same result would follow if wages were higher and commodities remained the same in price.

The workers, only seeing this much, are between two stools. They can struggle for higher wages, or reduced prices; or both. To concentrate on price reductions is a fallacy; because cost of production determines prices. True the price at one time may be above the cost of production, but that very fact induces greater production and thereby reduces price. While some commodities are rising in price others may be falling. In the first case the capital is increased, in the second it is withdrawn. In this way the fluctuations compensate each other, and the cost of production is shown to be the real price. Hence the fallacy.

On the other hand, if the workers concentrate on wages they are met by stubborn opposition from the masters, and are powerless to effect any real improvement in their standard of living. Only by con-

stant struggle, even, can they prevent reductions in their standard of living. On either hand they are faced with forces that are invulnerable to their puny weapons. Hence the need for them to understand Socialism.

Almost hopeless as is the struggle for higher wages any agitation for reduced prices is still more so. Yet we find the I.L.P. definitely advising the workers to follow this line. The National Administrative Council passed the following resolution (*New Leader*, 5-12-24).

"The I.L.P. declares that the rise in food prices is due to manipulation and speculation in food supplies by profiteering combines and trusts, and expresses the view that the effective remedy is State purchase of food and grain imports through a National Board of Supplies. We recommend the branches to educate and organise public opinion in favour of this reform with a view to its adoption by the Government at the earliest opportunity." etc.

Whether trusts and combines are responsible for high prices does not affect the question, because trusts and combines cannot be broken except by breaking the capitalist state. The *New Leader*, 28-11-24 admits this in a leading article, as follows:

"There may be talk of breaking up the Trusts: America, with all the bull moose energy of a Roosevelt, tried that and failed. . . . The disease of profiteering is organic: it is not to be cured by such simple means."

What then is the means according to the *New Leader*? In its issue 28-11-24 they say:—

"The ideal is to attain and to keep the general level of prices steady. We believe that by a conscious regulation of credit this can be achieved. It would be necessary, however, to take special measures to stabilise the prices of wheat and meat, and this again we would do by creating a national monopoly of these imported foods, based upon long-term contracts with the organised producers. Stunt thinking will not help us, nor guerilla attacks on the profiteer. Our battle is to alter the basic fact of instability with which private enterprise gambles."

All the I.L.P. promise the workers is to fix the prices of necessities at a level that would remain constant. Obviously wages would gravitate to a level that coincided with such prices, and the workers would be as they were minus the ups and downs in the money name of the value of their subsistence.

Notwithstanding this foolish advice, the I.L.P. in its leading article, *New Leader*, 5-11-12, says:—

"It is our task as a Socialist [?] Party, which is struggling to understand these obscure causes

which govern our lives, to insist on probing this fundamental fact of the trade cycle."

They appear to recognise the need for serious study, but will require to prosecute that study for some time before they "probe the fundamental fact." Such of their members as reach this goal will then leave the I.L.P. to join a Socialist Party—the S.P.G.B. P. F.

### THE CAPITALIST PRINCIPLES OF THE I.L.P. CONFESSED.

Our criticism of the I.L.P. in the January issue has brought from a correspondent copies of a letter written by him to the I.L.P. Head Office on this subject, and their reply. The letter of enquiry was passed over to the I.L.P. Information Committee, and the reply, signed by Ernest Hunter, contains the following illuminating passages:—

"The I.L.P. does state that production should be for use and not for profit, but this is not the be all and end all of Socialism. This statement does not exclude any possibility of the State making a profit. What it does mean is that service should be considered of more importance than profits."

"There is nothing in Socialism that prevents a man owning property. Socialism is chiefly an expression against the power which this possession of property involves. Hence some Socialists believe that interest—(not, as to-day, dividends)—should be paid to the wealth lent to the State: this interest to be equitable and fair. The chief feeling against the National Debt is not that it exists, but that it is owned by a comparatively few people who draw a huge tribute from their fellow countrymen."

The really startling admission is this:—

"It is a little difficult at the present moment to give a statement of what accurately represents the I.L.P. point of view on these financial points."

One cannot but be amused at the spectacle of a political party which, after thirty years of propaganda, finds it a little difficult to say exactly what it believes on a fundamental Socialist principle.

In reply to another definite question, the I.L.P. Head Office wrote:—

"I do not think there is any official I.L.P. view regarding the limited use of interest in a Socialist State. . . . It is a matter for future decision whether it will be absolutely abolished under Socialism."

It is therefore not surprising that we should have Mr. Fred Longden, a member of the N.A.C. of the I.L.P., writing of that Party's unemployment programme, that it

"Is the very antithesis of Socialism," and

lends itself to the entrenchment of a system that is naturally dying and is out of date."—(*Labour Monthly*, January, 1925.)

A similar enquiry addressed to the Labour Party brought a quite definite statement of their intention to allow the capitalists to go on "living by owning," their property to take the form of Government Stock:—

" . . . I think I am right in saying that there is a considerable consensus of opinion in the Movement against the usual principles of compensation being applied with regard to unknown minerals."

"Generally speaking, however, the Party accepts the principle of compensation, and, although close details have not been worked out in many instances, the problem will be met by the issue of redemption bonds."

(This letter is signed by Mr. J. S. Middleton, the Assistant Secretary.)

H.

### WORKERS' RESPONSIBILITIES.

Since the end of 1918 there have been numerous appeals by our masters and their agents through the columns of the daily Press to the working class to cease waging a struggle on the industrial field for improved conditions. Have they not told us of their grave difficulties through the world economic crisis, and their endeavour on our behalf to obtain contracts—even at a loss—in order to give us work?

They have reminded us of the "brotherly" feeling prevalent during the war and in the trenches, and exhorted us to live it all over again in the "piping times of peace."

Objections are sometimes raised that the Socialist Party is too destructive in its criticisms of the part played by the officials of the Trade Union movement and the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party, but any worker recognising the conflict of interests between the capitalist class and the workers realises there can be no community of interests between the robber and the robbed. Trade Union officials who urge the working class to consider the interests of the exploiters are without doubt the enemies of the exploited.

Just recently a small journal was handed to the writer, from which he extracts the following:—

"In addressing a meeting of women workers at York, Miss Margaret Bondfield, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour), gave such good advice that we are printing it for the advantage of our readers."

"She said, as a trade unionist, she must urge them to take a full share in the responsibility

for the success of the business. The times in which we lived were times of great seriousness to business people. In that factory they had an opportunity of sharing, through their Works Council, in the responsibility for the success of the business. It was a matter of definitely making up their minds to give a certain amount of thought to their work. Their employers desired to make the business a great contributing fact to the welfare of the country, and were trying to get away from the old idea that the only justification for business was to make money for certain members of the firm."

"Then there was the tremendously important matter of their own personal development. It was not merely a question of how to earn their daily bread, but how to use their leisure time. Personally, she liked a good novel and a cowboy film. But that must not be all. She found that what was most interesting was to read about the lives of clever and important people and the biographies of people who had made their mark in the world. They must cultivate a taste so that they could open the doors of literature and so get access to the whole world. In this cultivation of personal character they must seek to serve their generation, and think less about themselves."

*The National Amalgamated Monthly*, Aug. 1924.

There, now. Grumble no more. See Tom Mix at the movies, read of clever and important people, such as Horatio Bottomley and Lloyd George, who have made their mark in the world. Cultivate a taste for the literature of a Nat Gould, and all will be well.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 247. Vol. 21.]

LONDON, MARCH, 1925.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE]

## SOCIALISM AND "THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL."

(I.)

The Socialist Party of Great Britain stands for the International Organisation of the Working Class for the achievement of Socialism throughout the entire Capitalist World. It is not sufficient, however, for parties to call themselves Socialist or Communist to arouse our desire to affiliate with them. To be worthy of the name and to be useful in the struggle for Socialism, every party must be based upon a recognition of the class struggle and the line of action necessary for the workers to achieve victory over the capitalists.

The so-called Second International we long ago recognised as an anti-Socialist body, and therefore refused to affiliate with it. In the pages of the "Socialist Standard" we have exposed the opportunism and compromise of that body. The confusion and reformism exhibited in their International Congresses showed that it must be opposed and exposed, and the pages of this journal will testify to our criticism of the Bebels, Hyndmans, Millerands and Kautskys, who composed the leadership. We not merely exposed the leaders, but showed that the constitution and composition of the Second International were opposed to Socialism. We did not wait for the lessons of "war-time betrayals," but while people like Lenin and Rosa Luxembourg were active within it, we laid down reasons why it could not function for Socialists. The parties composing it were not Socialist, and the policy it pursued was therefore anti-Socialist.

The war gave added evidence to our criticism of the jingoistic and capitalist nature

of it. Since the war the Noskes and Scheidemanns, the MacDonalds and the Brantings have shown the entire capitalist character of this alleged Socialist International.

The fact that the largest unit of it is the British Labour Party, which in no sense even claims to be Socialist, shows how little this International is entitled to be called Socialist. The German Social Democrats have supplied further evidence of the need for untiring Socialist hostility to this mockery of an International.

Those who seceded from the Second International took action following the war to form a "fighting" International—the so-called Third, or Communist, International. It is generally supposed to be a real live revolutionary body such as every revolutionary should join. We propose, therefore, to examine its claims for support. Our previous remarks about the "Second" International should be borne in mind, because it will be shown that, despite all the Moscow denunciations of the "Second International," the two bodies possess sufficient in common to make joint action between them possible, not only in conference, but as allies in government.

Soon after the conquest of power by the Bolsheviks, the call for an International Congress at Moscow was issued. It was signed by Lenin and Trotsky for the Russian Communist Party and by eight other organisations. Amongst these latter was Lenin's Secretary, Boris Reinstein, who signed for the Socialist Labour Party of America, without their consent or endorsement. Whether the other signatures had

the backing of their organisations is not known.

The unsound position taken up at the inception of the 3rd International may be gathered from this call or manifesto.

"As a basis for the new International, we deem necessary the recognition of the following clauses, which we shall consider our platform and which have been worked out on the basis of the programme of the Spartacus Group in Germany and the Communist Party in Russia:—

"1. The present is the period of dissolution, and the collapse of the entire world system which will mean the entire collapse of European culture if capitalism with its unsolvable contradictions is not destroyed.

"2. The problem of the proletariat consists in immediately seizing the power of the State. This seizure of the power of the State means the destruction of the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the organisation of a new proletarian apparatus of power." The notion that Capitalism was collapsing in 1919 permeated the entire policy of the new "International." The framers of the manifesto knew little of the actual state of affairs outside of Russia, and evidently thought the end of the war was the death knell of the system. Thus the passage quoted tells the workers that the problem is the *immediate* seizure of the power of the State. The danger of such advice was easily proved by the small bodies on Russian lines that arose throughout the world, and adopted these mottoes of "seizing power" and "now is the time," "the revolution is just around the corner." The great mass of the workers were in no mood to seize power and would not know what to do with it if they did. The majority of workers were ignorant of their class interests, and were still saturated with the ideas of their masters. To tell them to seize power was not the message of Socialism, for before they can seize power with advantage to themselves the workers needed Socialist education—an understanding of the system under which they lived and the forces controlling it. To tell the workers of the world to seize power at once was to invite them to be crushed by the forces of the State, whose death-dealing power had so recently been shown on the battlefield.

The other idea preached in the quotation given, that the workers were to destroy the State apparatus is a further indication

of the sensational but worthless policy of the 3rd International. The State machine—that is, the instrument of government and the forces controlled through it—could not be dispensed with by a class rising to power in modern capitalist countries until Socialism had been established with the abolition of classes and the consequent dying out of the State.

Engels has well stated the attitude towards the State machine in his Introduction to Marx's "Civil War in France," where he says of the State:—

"At the very best it is an inheritance of evil, bound to be transmitted to the proletariat when it has become victorious in its struggle for class supremacy, and the worst features of which it will have to lop off at once until a new race grown up under free social conditions, will be in a position to shake off from itself this State rubbish in its entirety."

The idea of the immediate destruction of the power of the State is an anarchist policy. Lenin himself has opposed it, for in his criticism of the International of Youth ("Class Struggle," May, 1919) he says: "Socialists are willing to utilise the present government and its institutions in the struggle for the liberation of the working class, and also insist upon the necessity of so using the government in the creation of a suitable transition form from Capitalism to Socialism. This transition form, also governmental, is the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The manifesto of Moscow goes on to lay down its method:—

"The fundamental means of the struggle are mass action of the proletariat even to armed and open warfare with the State power of capital."

This became the accepted policy of Communists throughout the world, so that in a short time most of them had driven themselves underground into secret societies through such an insane programme. Some of their followers, such as the Spartacans in Germany, attempted to carry out this suicidal policy of armed and open warfare with terrible results to those concerned.

Mass action meant in Communist circles the "spontaneous upsurge of the proletariat." One of the leaders of the Moscow International, Louis Fraina, defines mass action in his "Revolutionary Socialism" (p. 196) as "the instinctive action of the

proletariat, gradually developing more conscious and organised forms for certain purposes."

"Organisations," says Fraina (the International Secretary of the C.P. of U.S.A.), "have a tendency to become conservative," and he relies upon the workers "acting instinctively under pressure of events."

This mass-action nonsense preached by Moscow is the very thing relied upon by our masters. The only sound action for Socialism must be guided by the workers' intelligence and knowledge. The blind instinctive actions of the workers are dangerous to workers' welfare, and are easily worked upon by capitalist orators and intellectuals in war time and peace time. Mob action is not the action to overthrow Capitalism and establish Socialism. Socialism depends upon organisation plus knowledge. Armed warfare by workers while capitalists control the forces of government is a policy both useless as well as suicidal. The advocacy of such a policy is reactionary, and provides the capitalists with excellent opportunities for butchery of the insurgents. To propose such a method as the 3rd International and its sections did, especially in view of the minority of workers in their ranks, was directly opposed to workers' interests. It betrayed the illusions which the 3rd International suffered and which still are general with that body.

A further examination of the policy of this so-called revolutionary International will be made in our next issue. A. K.

## A PUBLIC DEBATE IS MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE UNSOUND?

**Affirmative—Mr. F. KIRKLEY,**  
(London Constitutional Labour Movement)

**Negative—R. REYNOLDS,**  
(Socialist Party of Great Britain).

SUNDAY, MARCH 8th, at 7.30 p.m.

AT  
**LEYTON TOWN HALL,**  
HIGH ROAD, LEYTON

**Chairman—COUNCILLOR A. SMITH,**  
(Labour Candidate for Leyton).

**ADMISSION FREE.**

## WILLIE GALLACHER'S POLITICAL INDIGESTION.

We say that when the workers want Socialism they can and must control the political machinery, including Parliament. Mr. W. Gallacher, a Communist leader, who writes a weekly two columns of animated abuse in the Glasgow "Worker," thinks that we err, and offers to put us right (February 21st, 1925). He has read our leaflet "The Socialist and the Vote-catcher," reprinted from the November, 1924, "Socialist Standard," and is frankly disgusted with it. He finds that it is not the "brief outline of Socialism" it claims to be; that it "is hard to believe that anyone could write anything so foolish" as its "melancholy conclusion" or that "anyone could be found to hand it out and call it spreading the light." The conclusion he dislikes so much is this:—

"Don't trust any more to people who are going to bring Utopia here without the least effort on your part, but come into the Socialist Party and work for Socialism. Socialism will come when enough of you want it."

Gallacher says that we do not tell him how Socialism will come. He asks if we are prepared for the possible resistance of the Churchills and Birkenheads, and if they "should take action to prevent our majority operating what do the light-spreaders propose doing about it."

He assumes that our answer would be "Time enough when that happens" to consider the possibility, and proceeds to be very scornful about it. We are further accused of wanting "the workers to go forward blindly without any preparation or any organisation whatever." We are likened to the I.L.P. vote-catchers to whom elections are everything and who must do nothing which might cause them to lose votes.

He thinks that the King or a capitalist minority could defy a Socialist majority in Parliament, because this minority would be backed up by "the overwhelming majority of officers and through these controlling the rank and file." Then "What would the majority do?" he asks.

The real and only way to Socialism, according to Gallacher, is to smash capitalism, a statement with which we are not likely to disagree, but "capitalism won't smash

simply because a majority would like to see it smashed." Then after bringing us so far, Gallacher suddenly decides not to put us right after all. Instead of telling us how to smash capitalism, he rambles airily about the need "for us who are in earnest . . . to fight against the organised forces of capitalism." And there he finishes.

In striking contrast with Gallacher's vagueness, the S.P.G.B. is quite open and definite about the method of obtaining Socialism and of dealing with any resistance there may be. And in face of the plain statement of our position contained in our Declaration of Principles and other literature, not a line of Gallacher's would-be criticism has any bearing on the matter whatever. Instead of dealing with our policy he has the brazen impudence to attack the I.L.P. and the Labour Party, and link us up with their actions. He forgets that it is not the Socialist Party but he, and his own party, the Communists, who urge the workers to vote for those two anti-Socialist bodies.

We state that we want the workers to conquer the powers of government in order to use the political machinery, including the armed forces, for the purpose of overthrowing capitalism. We hold (and let Gallacher dispute it if he disagrees) that Socialism can exist only when the majority of workers want it. We also hold that a Socialist majority organised in the Socialist Party can obtain effective control by using its majority to capture the machinery of government. This disposes of our alleged neglect of organisation. Lastly, we hold that political control will give a Socialist working class control of the armed forces, and they will deal with capitalist minorities who rebel, in the way in which rebels are usually dealt with. Gallacher, be it noted, believes that the workers in the Army will, at such a time, not be influenced to support the Socialist majority either by their loyalty to constitutional authority or by their class sympathies, or by their knowledge of their own interests, but will follow those officers who decide to lead a revolt. He fails, however, to give a single argument in support of this fantastic belief.

So much for Gallacher's criticism of the S.P.G.B. Now let us examine Gallacher and his party.

The capitalist forces must be fought, and capitalism smashed, he says, but he leaves

us to guess how and by whom. The "Workers' Weekly" (February 24th, 1923) set out to tell us how it was to be done. "The capitalists will resist any change by all means at their disposal. The power of the capitalists must be wrested from them. The workers must set up their own State . . . ." But just when we were about to learn how it was going to happen we find, instead of an answer to the vital question, three little dots and the words "Censored by the printer." Then they go on to deal with their programme for the period after the capitalists have been disposed of. If the excuse were a true one, the position would be funny enough. These embryo dictators who are going to smash capitalism, and fight the whole forces of the State, cannot even dictate to a little back-street printer. But the excuse is simply a subterfuge to escape answering an awkward question. If they were not afraid to do so, everyone knows they could get their printing done in or out of the country.

And what are Gallacher's credentials for putting us right? He doesn't believe in Parliament, yet he belongs to a party which advocates "revolutionary parliamentarianism," and runs candidates. He believes Parliament is useless, and runs for it himself. He doesn't believe in waiting for a majority, yet he appeals (on a reform programme) to what he dubs "the heterogeneous crowd" in a constituency, for a majority so that he can get into the House. He believes in fighting unceasingly against capitalism, and asks you to vote for I.L.P. and Labour candidates whom he regards as capitalist agents. In the recent Dundee by-election he was canvassing for T. Johnston, just as he had supported his predecessor the late E. D. Morel, another anti-Socialist. His appeal was drawn up somewhat as follows:—

"Johnston is an anti-Socialist; all who want Socialism should vote for Johnston! Johnston is a humbug. Long live Johnston. Johnston is a scoundrel. Johnston for ever!"

He was almost in tears when he was falsely charged with having opposed this anti-Socialist. For some unaccountable reason Gallacher's articles are described as "Political Notes."

He belongs to the party which tells the workers to vote for Thomas, Clynes, MacDonald and the rest of the Labour Party defenders of capitalism. He speaks of

Churchill and Birkenhead, and himself supports the party which has the honour of having assisted Churchill into the House at the beginning of his career, and which was not averse from assisting Birkenhead and his party in the prosecution of the late war. He denounces vote-catching; Gallacher, who in a chequered career, has never known from one month to the next where he stood politically, or where he was going; who has drifted and tossed with every wind that blew; who has alternately supported and denounced nearly every pettifogging reform that was every proposed; who still advocates the treacherous communist tactic of giving insincere allegiance to the capitalist principles of the Labour Party, and the anti-Socialist tactic of asking workers to support those men and those principles. This is the man who implies that the S.P.G.B. trims to catch votes. Will Gallacher back up this or any other of his criticisms of the S.P.G.B.?

In 1920 Gallacher wrote that "any support of the Parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former." ("Workers' Dreadnought," February, 1920). It was true then, and is true now, that he does it. Was there also some truth in his statement that it is the "personal ambition" of the "professional politician" which makes revolutionaries help the enemy in this way? Or would it be kinder and more accurate for us to recognise that Gallacher is the distressed victim of his natural muddle-headedness on the one hand, and on the other of his uncontrolled and uninstructed hatred of a purely mythical "capitalism" created by his imagination? H.

"By capital the business world has always meant—whatever the economists may have tried to mean—wealth which its owner can employ for the purpose of gain; and by investment we meant partly the external, or business, fact that there really exist openings for the use of wealth in directions which will bring an income or 'revenue' over and above the return of the sum employed; and partly the internal, or psychological, fact that its owners are actually desirous of using it in such directions."

SIR WILLIAM ASHLEY.

## THE MOCKERY OF "FREEDOM."

The recent General Election was not entirely devoid of colour. Apart from the favours that varying schools of opinion adopted, there were the miniature cascades of leaflets in blue, yellow, green, orange, and other colours, which descended through our letter-boxes each day. Among them was one of a delightful lemon-yellow, bearing the leaded caption, "The Road to Freedom." It informed us with Spartan brevity that Great Britain was the freest country in the world. We were spared the encumbrance of definitions or comparisons, but were brought up against realities at once by the poser: "How did we get this freedom?" Then followed the answer: "We got it almost entirely through the work done by the Liberal Party."

You recognise the style, of course. Apart from the little word "almost," there is a refreshing sweep about a statement like that, which convinces everyone—except those who know the facts.

"But the facts are given overleaf!" Are they? Pray let us examine them. The pamphlet says:—

"Here are the four main stages by which we have obtained political freedom. (1) The Reform Act of 1832—passed by a Liberal Government; (2) The Reform Act of 1867—first introduced by Gladstone, 1866; finally passed 1867, when Disraeli was Prime Minister, and when Conservatives were in office, but passed by the Liberal Members who were still in a majority in the House of Commons. (3) The Reform Act of 1884—passed by a Liberal Government; (4) The Reform Act of 1918—the first steps were taken by Mr. Asquith in 1916, and the Act was passed when Mr. Lloyd George was Prime Minister of a Coalition Government. The Liberal Party also secured secrecy for the act of voting by passing the Ballot Act in 1872."

Now we will call some more evidence. We shall perhaps appreciate how useful a little word like "almost" can be. In the interests of space we shall have to condense, but the authorities given can be consulted at any public library.

No. 1. The Reform Bill of 1832 left the working class almost entirely out of the franchise; it broke down the monopoly which the aristocratic and landed classes had enjoyed, and admitted the middle class to a share of the law-making. This was all the more exasperating (to the workers) because the excitement and agitation for the Reform Bill were in great measure that of

working men.—(Justin McCarthy: Short History of Our Own Times, p. 17.)

No. 2. The Reform Bill of 1867. The £10 Borough Franchise was passed by the Tories in 1867 and was opposed by the Liberals. Gladstone's solicitude for the working class having the franchise may be gauged by his attitude towards the £6 Franchise proposed in 1866. Writing to Mr. Horsfall, Manchester, on Aug. 8th that year, he said: "I do not agree with the demand either for manhood or household suffrage."—(Mr. Gladstone: A Study, by L. J. Jennings, p. 245.)

The same work, on p. 22, records Mr. Gladstone as uttering the following: "Changes that effect sudden and extensive transfer of power are attended by great temptations to the weakness of human nature; and however high our opinion may be of the labouring classes, or of any other class of the community, I do not believe that it would be right to place such a temptation within the reach of any of them."

From 1832 to 1867 the Liberals had a majority in most of the nine Parliaments of that period, but although repeatedly pledged to give the workers a share in the franchise they broke their promises time after time.—(History of Our Own Times.)

No. 3. The Reform Act of 1884 did little more than extend the franchise given to householders, etc., in 1867, from the boroughs to the counties.—(Any Encyclopædia.)

No. 4. The Reform Act of 1918. This is a gem: "The first steps were taken by Mr. Asquith in 1916," says the pamphlet; about the same time as he was conferring the inestimable "liberty" of conscription upon us, we presume. No details are given, but surely credit should have been claimed for giving the vote to Service men. Much was made of this colossal advance, at the time, but there appears to have been a conspiracy of silence on the point since. The reason may be that, as so few of them could use it then, self-bestowed bouquets were quite safely in order, whereas now it is somewhat dubious as to whether it exists at all.

"It dates from March of this year, when the Admiralty decided to fall into line with the War Office, and to withdraw from the Navy, as had already been done early in 1922, from the Army, the privileges accorded originally during the 1918 election . . . and to revert to the pre-war rule in this respect."—"Daily News," 24/10/24.

But as the whole Act was passed by the Coalition Government, the credit must be diluted under the "almost" clause. The remainder of the pamphlet claims credit for the benefits and liberties conferred upon the workers by Education and Industrial Freedom, i.e., freedom of combination. The following facts may be helpful in assessing the value of the Liberal Party's efforts in those directions.

The anti-combination laws evolved during the 56 years of Whig rule, 1714 to 1770, were consolidated by the Tories in 1799. In 1824 Francis Place and Joseph Hume pushed through an Act permitting combination. In 1825 the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, obtained the repeal of the Act, declaring they were quite unaware such an Act had been passed.—(Footnote, p. 94, Webb's History of T.U.)

In 1830 the Whigs took the name of Liberals, and Lord Melbourne appointed two Commissioners to enquire into the standing of Trade Unions. These in their report advised such repressive measures that the Government dared not bring them before Parliament. It was the Liberals who prosecuted the Lancashire miners (1832) for threatening to strike; the Southwark Shoemakers (1832) for picketing; the Bermondsey Tanners (1834) for leaving their work unfinished; who were guilty of the blackest crime on record against Trade Unionism when they sentenced six Dorchester labourers to seven years' transportation to Tasmania for the appalling offence of forming a Trade Union, the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers.—(Sydney Webb's History, T.U.)

"After a good deal of opposition on the part of the Whig Ministry of that day, backed as it was by the major portion of the manufacturing classes, and after much delay, the men were 'pardoned,' and ordered to be liberated. But . . . the men had been hastened out of the country, and . . . literally sold as slaves at £1 per head; and even when they were pardoned, some of them did not hear of their pardon until years afterwards. . . ."—(Geo. Howell's "Conflicts of Capital and Labour.")

Yes! The Liberals have ever been great lovers of liberty. The bitterest opponents of the Factory Acts were Liberals. The venomous persecutors of the Chartists were Liberals. The deadliest enemies of combination on the part of the workers were Liberals. When, in 1869, Frederick Harrison drew up a Bill legalising Trade Unions,

the Liberal Government opposed it. They passed one themselves in 1871, and shortly afterwards seven women were sent to prison for shouting "Bah" after a blackleg in South Wales, and some London gas-workers were sent to prison for preparing to strike. This under Gladstone.—(History of Trade Unionism.)

The draft of the Ballot Act of 1871 contained a clause authorising payment of election expenses. Rejected by a large Liberal majority.—(History of Our Own Times.)

For several years Mr. Plimsoll had urged the Liberals to pass an Act to prevent the sending of rotten ships to sea for the sake of the insurance, whereby numbers of sailors were deliberately murdered. On one occasion when he pointed out several Liberal shipowners guilty of this practice, he was thrown out of the House of Commons. The first Bill introducing the load line, called the Plimsoll Line, was passed by the Tories in 1875.—(History of Our Own Times.)

When Bradlaugh was returned for Northampton and declined to take the oath in their form, the liberty-loving Liberals refused to let him sit; on one occasion employing ten policemen to throw him out.—Gladstone period, 1884-1886 (History of Our Own Times). It was the Liberal Asquith who had the troops despatched to Featherstone in 1893, resulting in the killing of two innocent people and the maiming of others.

But need we go on? More recent history you already know. D.O.R.A., of blessed memory. National Registration (precursor of Conscription in spite of explicit denials at the time), the brutal suppression of conscience and opinion during the war; these, and more, were the work of the Liberals.

Freedom! Liberty!! Read their record. The only liberty they have known is the liberty to exploit labour. Have we omitted anything from their rotten record? We have—piles of evidence. We have even omitted to mention they were a capitalist party. Is it necessary to add this now? Why, in their earlier days they were capitalism, as distinct from the Tory landed interest. The plague spots of Sheffield, Ancoats, Lanark, Cradley; the industrial wens of the Black Country, the Potteries, the chemical districts, the mining areas; these are the heritage of the Liberal Party. A generation or so ago they re-christened

Liberty. They called it by a French name—*laissez faire*—let alone. That was their idea of liberty, "Let us alone." The slogan of the Manchester school: Starve, sweat, bludgeon, oppress and exploit, but let us alone. Men were stunted, crippled and crushed; women brutalised in mines and factories; children taken from workhouses and "apprenticed" to industrial exploiters; but—*laissez faire*; let us alone.

Fortunately, there are other conceptions of Liberty; other conceptions of Freedom. For us they are not mere mellifluous phrases to which are offered high-sounding apostrophies at election times. To us they are not thin abstractions floating gossamer-like over a sea of blatherspite. We visualise real freedom as belonging to a time when the whole people have free access to Mother Earth; when the whole people are free from the incubus of a parasitic class; when the whole people socially own their means of living; when development shall be free from the shackle of selling, and production free from the necessity of profit. Freedom will then lose its capital letter. It would be the normal, not the sum of a few piffing, fraudulent reforms.

It remains but to remind you: "who would be free, himself must strike the blow." Put not your trust in people of any party who are going to get freedom for you. Join with us in the Socialist Party and get it for yourselves. W. T. H.

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(J.F.H.)

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MARCH



1925

**THE FALLACIES OF THE "MINORITY MOVEMENT."**

The very people who always shout "Be with the masses" and "Form a Mass Party" are now busy pushing forward a body called "The National Minority Movement." The utter stupidity of the title should strike even the doubly-dense Communists who are promoting it.

The aims of the "movement" are in no sense revolutionary. A minimum wage of £4 per week and a 44-hour week is their modest slogan, and if carried out by the capitalists generally would create no real alteration in the system.

With the present cost of living and the growing intensity of labour demanded by employers, these "Minority" aims are just a stabilising of capitalist conditions. Demands like these have been adopted by capitalists who have increased their profits by so doing.

General practice has shown that Minimum Wage Laws and Trade Boards act generally to make the minimum wage the maximum. Our "four pound a week revolutionists" would be compelled to fight against their own aims as carried out by employers, just as miners were compelled to strike against the much-fought-for Eight Hour Law when it was put into action.

Forty-four hours a week is another ridiculous demand for a movement supposed to

be militant. Modern highly-developed exploitation can skin the workers quite well in 44 hours, as is shown by employers like Ford and Leverhulme who boast of their rising profits from reduced hours of employees. In fact the exhausting effect of modern industrial methods and machinery is such that the employers are often compelled to shorten hours to avoid having reduced output from tired workers. The miners have long since found this out, and a 44-hour week for them is as reactionary a proposal as a Tory could invent. The miners have made continual protests against the League of Nations' 8-hour statute being adopted.

Another demand is Nationalisation of Mines, Minerals, Banks, Land and Railways without compensation, and with workers' control. With all the lessons of the effects of Government ownership upon the workers, these Communists are still busy with such anti-Socialist proposals. Workers' control without worker ownership is an empty thing in practice. "Those who own control," and unless the workers are in possession of the State power, and therefore the ruling class, their so-called control could never be made effective. When the workers are in possession of the State machine and are revolutionary, the time for nationalisation would be gone, for then common ownership would be in order and possible.

They further demand "An Adequate Housing Scheme" without telling the workers that such a thing is impossible under Capitalism, for even if houses are plentiful, sufficient and regular wages are not. The fact that plenty of rooms were available before the war did not make it any easier for poverty-stricken workers to rent them. The capitalists will give the workers barracks, huts and iron boxes to live in when it suits their purpose.

A curious demand is the "Repudiation of the Dawes Report." Seeing that the party most of these minority men belong to is the Labour Party, it is rather sad that they have to demand the repudiation of the Report adopted by their own Party when in office: A very curious demand to make in view of the action of the leader of the Minority Movement during the General Election. Mr. Cook, the Secretary of the Miners, then came to the support of the Labour Party who were defending their action in carrying out the Dawes Report.

Practically all of the Communists in the Minority Movement were then busy supporting the Labour Party which had adopted the infamous Dawes plan they are now demanding the repeal of.

In general, all the items on the "charter" of this Minority Movement are worthless. The fact that they call themselves a Minority Movement damns them from the start, for on the economic field numbers count when a contest is on for obtaining some advance. Not minorities, but majorities, are then required, and a minority movement left to fight for some demand is doomed. The mass of the workers must be united in support of a national advance before we can expect them to obtain it.

The nature of the demands we have shown above to be capitalist in their nature, and they can all be carried out without making any radical change for the better in workers' conditions.

These demands take no account of the vastly accelerating rate of exploitation in modern industry. They ignore the increasing power of capitalists combined in federations and rings to defeat the efforts of labour on the economic field and their growing financial strength to conquer the puny purses of working men in times of strikes and lock-outs.

Such demands in terms of a set rate of wages and length of working day are reactionary in face of the ever-growing need of workers to struggle on the economic field for increase of wages and shortening of working day.

The political proposals of this movement could only be carried out if those in control of government passed the demands into law. To appeal therefore to capitalists and their Labour agents to pass certain legislation is to support the present system and those who rule it. It is to ask the workers to prolong capitalism by voting for those politicians who have a programme of properly selected reforms. The Minority schemers thus ignore the class nature of modern society and its resulting class rule in the interests of the class who rule capitalism—the employers.

The Communists largely run this "movement" with its conferences of "delegates" who are supposed to represent large numbers. What is the real nature of the Communists' efforts in it? Are they arousing the workers to a knowledge of Social-

ism and spreading an understanding of the social revolution and its necessity? The answer is "No." The Communists are spreading reform programmes like nationalisation, etc., and advocating support of the reactionary Labour Party. They are carrying out the 21 points and theses of Moscow in getting the jobs in trade unions and similar bodies. In other words they are trying to capture the jobs, but they do not attempt to win the workers' minds for Socialism. That is too long and too unremunerative a job. It is easier to plank down some demands which are suitable to Capitalist rule and get support for that and become prominent in such an agitation. Then it is easy to get adopted as a Labour candidate.

Displacing a trade-union leader and putting in his place a so-called advanced man is a matter which in itself achieves small results. The lesson of Cramp and Hodges and dozens of other "forward" men should show that. The fundamental thing is to displace the ignorance of the rank and file and then their growing knowledge will express itself in their choice of and control of officers. Otherwise with an ignorant membership the same game of betrayal can be played by the new "leader" they choose as played by the previous one.

The replacing of one official by Robert Williams, the Communist, did not make any difference on "Black Friday" or on the workers' support of the leaders who smashed the alliance on that classic occasion.

The Socialist policy is one of spreading revolutionary ideas amongst the workers, organised and unorganised, in order that capitalism shall be abolished and Socialism established. That is the work of a mass movement, not a Minority Movement.

**"SOCIALISM AND RELIGION."**

The Socialist Educational Society of New York have, by permission of the S.P.G.B., reprinted the above pamphlet. The S.P.G.B. are the sole agents for the pamphlet in this country, and copies can be obtained from Head Office at 5d. each, postage 1d. extra, Special terms for quantities.

**NOTICE.**

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

**A LOOK ROUND.****INCREASED PRODUCTION—OF PROFITS.**

"The big facts to concentrate on are two. First, the great majority of Englishmen are much poorer than they ought to be. Secondly, the problem of how to make them richer can only be solved through a great increase in their productivity. It never can be solved by tinkering at the distribution of the utterly inadequate wealth, which at present is all that they can produce."—("Daily Chronicle," 7/2/25.)

Both the above "big facts" avoid the main issue. The first is ambiguous, the second is disproved everywhere. The question the workers must ask is, Why are they poor? despite the fact that it is they alone who convert the earth's materials into a prodigious quantity of wealth. The object of the "Chronicle" writer is to obscure as far as possible the main contradiction within capitalist society, increasing poverty side by side with increasing wealth. If increased production was all that was required to remove poverty, then one and a half million idle workers could help to solve the problem, or the capitalists could refrain from deliberately restricting production in tea, cotton, rubber, wheat, and in practically every large industry. "How can it be done? Upon an adequate scale only in one way—by increasing the output per man of the workers." (Ibid.) Note well the "per man," which means an increased output by those AT WORK, or in other words, fewer workers required for an equal or even greater amount of wealth produced. Has increased production brought prosperity to the mill operatives?

The power loom abolished the hand weaver—to-day a girl in a Lancashire mill turns out more cloth in a day than a whole village of her ancestors could have done in a week.—("System," August, 1924.)

Yet the operatives live in poverty, and short time working has been the order of the day. Though the "Chronicle" talks of the "utterly inadequate wealth," observe how adequate it is for those who take no part in its production:—

The immense profit of £8,365,168 was earned by the Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland) during the last year. . . . It is nearly £1,000,000 in excess of the nett income for the previous 12 months. (7/2/25). ("Daily Chronicle," same date.)

"Those who invested in March, 1918, in the Rolls Royce Company, Ltd., have had their capital doubled by bonus shares, and have each year received a dividend of eight per cent. on the whole of that capital."—("Daily Herald," 13/1/25.)

Everywhere it is the same, a production of wealth once unthought of and yet—the worker to-day gets on the average just what the chattel and the serf did, their subsistence, except that they get it through the medium of money (wages). While the workers remain sellers of labour power they cannot command more than the price of that sale (wages), therefore in proportion to the ever-increasing amount of wealth they produce their conditions MUST GET WORSE. Heed not the capitalist liars, there is no problem of wealth production to-day, for the industrial revolution solved that problem. The question of poverty can only be solved by the workers themselves through the Social Revolution.

\* \* \*

**ELASTIC PRINCIPLES.**

The class war does not depend for its existence upon the whims of agitators as our rulers and their supporters pretend to believe. The conflict existing between the two historically developed classes, capitalists and wage workers, is that between buyers and sellers of labour power. Buyers wish to buy cheap, and sellers realise as much as possible on their sale. The human element of necessity on the part of the workers (for labour power quickly deteriorates) makes, the conflict a stern reality. This fact is becoming thrust upon the workers in their struggle to live, with such persistency that even the Labour leaders, once wont to deny the class struggle, find themselves compelled to admit its existence by lip service, even if they outrage its every implication in practice.

The following is a choice example of this fact:—

I am not an unrepentant believer in the class struggle. I know of no Socialist Party that preaches the class struggle. There is no word in the Socialist vocabulary of that description.

Mr. R. C. Wallhead said he was not one of those who went about the country proclaiming there was no such thing as the class struggle, because he was not prepared to deny the facts as they were.

The above are the statements of the same individual, a prominent member of the I.L.P. (Gleanings and Memoranda, July, 1924, and February, 1925, respectively.) Neither are they the mere inconsistency of an individual, for that party, like the Labour Party, has from their inception, through the war, and down to the present time, been a party of confusion and compromise.

With a support comprising every shade of opinion except Socialist, and led by individuals either ignorant or unscrupulous, they merely lend their numbers to the support of every nostrum drawn across the workers' path. The important fact for the Socialist, however, is the anti-working class nature of the activities of these Labour leaders. They do take part in the class war, whether they deny it or admit it—on the masters' side.

\* \* \*

**SOFT SOAP.**

According to a leading article, "Daily Herald," 14th Feb., 1925, "The Royal Family appears anxious above all things to avoid change," "to maintain old pomp and ceremonies," etc. Not the capitalist class, mark you; and has the "Herald" forgotten the toadying of Labour leaders at Court functions? Mrs. Snowden, that ardent admirer of capitalist institutions, was much perturbed by the remarks of the so-called "wild men" anent the money required for the Prince of Wales' trip to South Africa and America. Think of it. Gracious!

"The suggestion that the Royal House does not do any work is just absolute nonsense. I consider they are the hardest worked people in the country."—"People," 15/2/25.)

At what they worked Mrs. Snowden did not say.

Mere physical effort does not constitute work in the economic sense, otherwise burglars, coiners, etc., would be deemed to be engaged in that enervating pastime. The unremitting toil of the workers in mine, factory and chemical hell, such trifles can be dismissed with an insinuating insult—it is the parasites on parasites who are the "hardest worked" people. The "wild men," too, must justify their position in order to allay the growing suspicion and discontent of their followers who expect somebody to do something for them. They must obtain a little notoriety in some way or other so as to appear to be doing that "something." But it does not concern the workers whether the wealth of which they have been robbed is spent on rebuilding churches, champagne orgies or Royal Figureheads. When in the House of Commons capitalists like Sir Alfred Mond lie and misrepresent Socialism, or when the Labour Party prepares the armed forces as strike breakers, the extremists or wild men

show their capitalist subservience—for they are as tame as white mice.

\* \* \*

**SHORTAGE OF HOVELS.**

It would appear from a reading of the capitalist press that slums and rotten houses, or no houses, were innovations in the workers' drab existence. Even parsons and "ladies" have discovered this phase of social corruption when its gravity threatens the future security of the idlers whose affluence is based upon such misery. Are houses the only things of which you suffer a shortage? Does it not apply equally to millions of the workers regarding food, clothing, and the essentials for a rational existence? Though you can provide these things in abundance, under present-day arrangements they will not be produced unless providing profit and rent for the idlers first. Your masters try to hide the true cause of the present housing conditions by lies about irksome labour restrictions, dearth of materials, etc., but did one ever hear of a shortage of residences for the capitalists, or of buildings in which to carry on their commercial undertakings? The following shows the hypocritical nature of their excuses, for business must come first whatever the wealth producers lack:—

"The year 1924 has seen a big revival of building in London, much of which, including some great operations in the City, will not be completed until the end of the year. . . . The square mile of the City indeed is undergoing a more vigorous transformation than at any time in the present century."—"Manchester Guardian," 12/2/24.)

"Commercial rebuilding has nowadays become so insistent that there appears to be hardly a great thoroughfare in London in which there are not evidences of it."—"Fortnightly Review," February.)

\* \* \*

**THE ALIEN MYTH.**

With an ever-growing army of unemployed and increasing insecurity of life for the workers, old bogeys are dug up to do further service. Commenting on what they call the alien question the "Evening News," 12th Feb., 1925, says:—

"How odd it is that Socialists, who pose as the only friends of the British workman, are invariably on the side of the foreigners who wish to come in here and take his job."

Presumably the wealthy visitors to "our" country are not aliens, as like their

thoroughbred (!) British prototype, they are not likely to undertake any jobs.

No matter the land of birth of the workers, as a class it is they who have the monopoly of work, a most desirable arrangement for the capitalist class and one they will be in no hurry to upset. A little reasoning would soon convince the worker that the alien question is merely dust thrown in their eyes to blind them to fundamental causes. Competition for jobs is just as keen, and conditions just as vile, in occupations where the so-called alien hardly enters—docks, railways, agriculture—as it is upon the seas where every nationality sails.

The world over, irrespective of geographical boundaries, poverty is the lot of the Working Class. In peace, as in war, your masters will make to order, as friends or foes, workers of other countries in order to divide you. Study Socialism and you will find a wealth of meaning in the words of Marx and Engels:—Working men of all countries, unite. The Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Mac.

### SOME COMMUNIST QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

To the Editor, "The Socialist Standard."  
Dear Comrade,

For the instruction of some readers, will you kindly deal with the following controversial matter in next issue of "Standard"?—

1. What is the view-point of the S.P.G.B. re claim of Communist Party to be the only correctly-poised party of the working class?

2. What is the real aim of the Communist Party in seeking affiliation to that anti-Socialist organisation, the Labour Party?

What is meant in reality by the phrase, "The United Front" as used by the Communist Party?

3. What does the phrase "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" infer?

4. Are Communists correct in saying that it is insufficient to use the word *Revolution* without also adding the prefix *Violent*?

5. What is your opinion of their historical knowledge in claiming that the first known revolution in history was the Capitalist overthrow of Feudalism?

6. That this was a *Violent Revolution*, so, consequently, the Socialist Revolution must of necessity be violent?

7. That the Communist Party being alone in preaching the slogan *Violent Revolution*, are the only class-conscious revolutionary working-class organisation?

8. And is there not every possibility of the Communist Party being *driven underground*, or even out of existence altogether, *through their idea of correct tactics*?

Even a brief answer to above matter would be welcome.

Yours fraternally,  
"STUDENT."

### ANSWER TO "STUDENT"

To answer fully the above questions would mean reprinting numerous articles that have appeared in the previous issues of the "Socialist Standard." Among these may be mentioned articles in the January, February, March and October, 1923, issues, and in the January and March issues, 1924.

As our correspondent only asks for brief answers, the following may meet the present case. It should be noted, however, that the policy of the Communist Party is not a stable guide or definite pronouncement for their general activities. It changes with the ease and rapidity of a chameleon. Nor does it merely change. The policy of one day will contradict that of another, sometimes with "violence" to both sense and logic:—

1. The Communist Party are not even incorrectly poised—they are not poised at all. They will follow any will-o'-the-wisp that offers them a chance of a little notoriety, whether it is a "United Front," a shout about taxation, or an attack upon some misleader of the working class, whom they support at an election.

2. The real aim is to secure the jobs now held by the Thomases, MacDonalds, etc., whom they denounce one day and support the next, and to obtain a position of influence and leadership over the organised workers for the purpose of taking the bigger jobs such position may bring. The "United Front" means that the organised workers are called upon to unite in placing their organisations, their funds, and the full control of all matters, economic and political, in the hands of the leaders of the Com-

munist Party. The reluctance of these workers to commit such an act of suicide for the temporary advantage of a few frauds is, of course, due to these workers being "bourgeois-minded."

3. The only inference that can be drawn from this phrase as it is used by the Communist Party is that the leaders of that party should be given power to "dictate" to the rest of the community.

4. To establish Socialism a social revolution is necessary. Violence is not only *not necessary*, but, under favourable conditions, will not occur in such revolution. Even if violence did appear it would be due to the folly of the opponents of Socialism—like capitalists and Communists—and not by the wish of the Socialists.

5. Such "historical" knowledge is beneath contempt, and shows an ignorance even of the "Communist Manifesto" by Marx and Engels.

6. This claim is not merely illogical—it is ridiculous. Because under a certain set of conditions violence was used, this does not give the slightest reason for the claim that under different conditions it is necessary.

7. Merely another sample of the empty bombast of the Communist Party. Moreover, their claim is false, as they are not the only party to preach violence. Groups of anarchists have done so for years—with ghastly failure as a result.

8. The Communist Party apes a secret society now. Their Executive Committee not only meet but *act* in secret, and members are given orders to take certain actions, even relative to their private affairs, without having any consultation or voice in the matters. Members are expelled without the formulation or hearing of any charges, and often the member knows nothing of the matter till he receives the notification of his expulsion. The members are kept in ignorance of what schemes are being prepared, or what policies are decided upon, until they receive their orders from the head office. The antics of this pantomime secret society merely results in the bewilderment of the membership, while adding to the hilarity of the lookers on. If the Communist Party ever attempted to form a *serious* secret society their end would be swift and certain.

Ed. Com.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

#### HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

We are continuously asked why we don't publish new pamphlets or re-publish old ones that are out of print. Our answer has been to point to that ever-pressing problem of finance. A party like ours, depending upon its members for financial support and faced with the inevitable poverty of a working-class membership—our party is forced to curb its publishing activity within very narrow limits. Such a valuable and much-needed publication as our party pamphlet, "Socialism and Religion," is urgently required at a low price, and its re-publication in that form would find a ready sale. It would have been re-issued long ago had sufficient funds come in.

Amongst other publications very much needed we have in view a pamphlet on the Principles of Socialism. The enormous amount of rubbish printed in the name of Socialism in recent years, with its confusing effect on the workers' minds, makes the scientific and revolutionary pronouncements of The Socialist Party an urgent necessity. We have, therefore, opened a fund called "A New Publications Fund," which will be reserved for the purpose of new publications. We invite members and sympathisers immediately to send in donations marked for that fund. If you cannot afford much, send in the little you can. If the readers of the *Socialist Standard* who appreciate the soundness of our party position will hurry along their contributions to the fund, we can rapidly get to work.

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## THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

### ITS ECONOMIC ORIGIN AND MENTAL RESULTS.

Ideas don't fall down from heaven, but are drawn from material at hand. Consequently the idea of the class-struggle must have been drawn from the struggle itself. In other words, the class struggle must have existed before we could become conscious of it. This is involved in the very expression *Class-conscious*. A logical conclusion from this is that those who were not conscious of the class struggle must have waged the battle in the first place. If this is so, why cannot class-unconscious (what one questioner calls "non-revolutionary") workers still take part in the struggle?

Those who contend that the class struggle only exists where there are class-conscious workers, and even then only between the class-conscious and the ruling class, are driven to the absurd position that the class struggle is *imposed* on society. That instead of ideas being the product of material conditions, material conditions are produced by ideas.

In spite of views to the contrary, however, no individual with a mighty brain came on the scene possessed with the brilliant idea of imposing the class struggle on society and ordered the combatants to line up and go ahead. The combatants were there, the struggle existed, but whereas formerly it was fought blindly, now some of the combatants fight with their eyes open. Marx could only lay bare the modern class struggle by tearing aside the surrounding veil of confusion and illustrating its existence.

The statement that the commodity the worker owns is sold and bought upon the market like any other commodity is quite correct; yet it is misleading when put forward without full explanation of the nature of the transaction.

The worker comes upon the market with a commodity to sell—the only commodity he has for sale—his power to work. The commodity the worker sells, however, differs from all other commodities in certain essentials. In the first place, it is the commodity of a particular class, and is sold to another, entirely different, class. The workers combine among themselves to sell their commodity as high as possible—the masters

combine among themselves to buy it as low as possible. This is the industrial aspect of the class struggle.

While there is a similarity between the worker coming on the market to sell his commodity and the capitalist coming on the market to sell his wares, yet there is an essential difference—the difference that breeds the class struggle. There are temporary opposing interests between buyers and sellers of ordinary commodities, but there is a permanent class cleavage between buyers and sellers of labour-power.

The commodity the worker sells produces all value, and the amount of surplus value the buyers of it obtain is determined by the difference between the value of the labour-power and the value that the labour-power can produce.

The value of labour-power is determined by its cost of reproduction, and this largely depends upon the standard of living physical surroundings necessitate and social development have handed down. Around the question of the standard of living a constant struggle goes on—on the capitalist side the attempt to reduce it to the absolute minimum, on the workers' side the resistance to this attempt. The result of the struggle so far has been a steady lowering in the workers' standard of comfort. This struggle is peculiar only to the labour-power commodity, and this peculiarity bears fruit in the form of the class struggle.

The workers and masters meet upon the market as equals in the sense that they are both either buyers or sellers of commodities—but here the equality ends. The worker is bound to sell his commodity or starve, and it is this fact that binds the worker to a position of slavery—it is this fact that illustrates the sham nature of the "equality" of buyers and sellers so far as the labour-power commodity is concerned. The main objective of the two classes, so far as buying and selling is concerned, is entirely different. The capitalist buys in order to sell—invests capital; the worker, on the other hand, sells in order to buy—sells his energy in order to obtain the wherewithal to live.

The basis of present society is the ownership of the means of living by one class. This compels the other class that makes up society to sell its only possession—labour-power—in order to live.

Therefore the sale of labour-power is the sale by a class of its only possession, whilst the buying of labour-power is the purchase by a class of the factor that enables it to live without working. It is in his capacity as a member of the master class, as opposed to the working class, that the capitalist buys labour-power. Consequently, the buying and selling of labour-power is a class question.

It is otherwise with the ordinary commodities which are sold without respect to class distinctions and where buyers and sellers meet as equals unaffected by the class question.

As soon as a child of the working class enters employment it takes a part, however insignificant it may appear, in the class struggle. This struggle, in its early stages, is not a struggle for the overthrow of the system; nevertheless, it is part of the class struggle—the struggle of a class for existence. Ultimately it develops into the struggle for the overthrow of the class that suppresses. In other words, the industrial struggle, the struggle to resist the encroachments of capital (the early form of the modern class struggle), with growing knowledge of necessity demands the political struggle, the struggle for the overthrow of the ruling class.

Capitalism took its departure from the conditions that severed the bonds binding the worker to the soil and threw him upon the market a free labourer—a seller of one commodity. The subjection of the wage-labourer—the class division—was the basis and starting point of capitalism. Therefore, to place the worker, from the point of view of a commodity seller, on a par with all other sellers of commodities is to discard the scientific examination of society and social development, and signifies the throwing overboard of the life-work of Marx.

The capitalist as a seller of commodities is engaging in an ordinary trading transaction—the worker in selling his commodity is engaging in a struggle for life. The failure to sell for a comparatively short period in his case is likely to result in death by starvation—quite a common occurrence.

The fact that there is a broad class distinction between sections of the population has been recognised by most people for generations, as instance the general acceptance by the workers of the sobriquet

"Working Class," and their deferential attitude towards their "Betters." Where they were lacking in knowledge of the real position was shown by the common idea that the way was easy for a worker to get out of his class and into the idle class.

As the class struggle becomes fiercer and the line of class cleavage more apparent, the facts impress themselves more and more clearly upon the minds of the workers—even though the process may appear slow to a superficial observer. Ideas that not very many years ago would have been looked upon as the ideas of dreamers are now generally accepted facts. The question, "Is it necessary that the workers must change their mental attitude towards past and present conditions?" is quite unnecessary, because the fact is that the workers are changing their mental attitude quite apart from their wishes in the matter—although very slowly becoming class-conscious. The knowledge of capitalism and how it affects them is becoming clearer and clearer, and consequently the workers are slowly coming nearer to the view that the overthrow of the system is the only solution to the surrounding evils. Class action on the part of the workers is not necessarily class-conscious action, as witness the Chartist and similar movements on the part of the working class.

The working class is destined to be a revolutionary class, whether the members of that class recognise the fact or not. They are the inheritors of the highest achievements of the past and the harbingers of the era when man's age-long-developed ingenuity will have the opportunity to give of its finest flower. The *experiences* of the struggle develops knowledge on this point and breeds sound ideas. This knowledge is not acquired in a day, a month, or a year, but is the result of the accumulated experiences of years of struggle—*class struggle*.

The matter is summed up, then, as follows:

The labour-power commodity is like all other commodities in that it is bought and sold upon the market, its value determined by the cost of production around which the higgling of the market allows its price to fluctuate.

It is unlike all other commodities in that it is the commodity of a particular slave class sold to a particular dominant class;

and further in that the standard of living, an historical element, enters into the question of its cost of production.

It is these two distinctions that make of the matter a class conflict as apart from the ordinary matter of the competitive buying and selling of commodities.

The modern class struggle, therefore, presents two aspects. On the one side the struggle on the part of the workers to sell labour-power under the best conditions—the industrial struggle for wages and hours of labour; on the other side the struggle for the overthrow of the wages system—the political struggle for Socialism. The class-unconscious worker takes part in the former, but only the class-conscious in the latter. The class struggle is, consequently, both industrial and political—the latter is its ultimate, its revolutionary form.

GILMAC.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Marxengelian (Hackney) asks: "Does the Army and Navy add any value to the wealth produced under the system where they are socially necessary?"

*Answer:* No. The Army and Navy are maintained out of the surplus value taken from the producers. The Army and Navy are necessary to the ruling class to maintain their domination. The armed forces are not required in the production of exchange values. Value is created in the production and socially necessary transportation of wealth. In this sphere the armed forces do not function.

Ed. Com.

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Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.  
**Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

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## THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

### OBJECT.

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

## Declaration of Principles.

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

#### HOLDS—

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## MR. BALDWIN'S UTOPIA.

### CAN LIONS AND LAMBS CO-OPERATE?

So many people have jumped on poor Mr. Baldwin for his recent appeal for an industrial truce, that it seems a shame to add to their number. He is such an "honest" man; so obviously well-meaning; so kindly. His democratic tastes are illustrated by his addiction to the plebian pipe. In many of his speeches, how beautifully has he voiced his love of the English countryside; its farms, its hedgerows, its winding lanes and quiet villages. He loves the memory of the old days, when man and master were personal friends and the "sack" almost unknown. A man of simple tastes, with nothing of the "high brow" or superior person about him. If we were writing his life for a Sunday dope-sheet, we should describe him as "a plain, simple, home-loving Englishman; a lover of peace and tranquillity." As we are writing for a Socialist paper, we have to take a wider view. We have to recognise that he is a big capitalist in a big essential industry. We must note that he is the elected head of a malignantly capitalist party. We must observe that he is speaking for the class that pays him and of which he is a representative member. This is not set down in any personal, malicious spirit, but as a plain statement of self-evident fact.

The speech itself was in no way remarkable. That it has occasioned such widespread controversy is an eloquent comment on the poverty of contemporary politics. One searches it in vain for a definite, tangible, constructive proposal upon which one can fasten and say, "Here is a gleam of

hope for the workers." It was thickly besprinkled with woolly phrases such as: "Suspicion must be removed"; "all must join hands to pull the country into a happier position"; "all concerned in industry should try and get to the root of this kind of thing"; "all should take counsel together and see where and how improvement can be made in this country, to achieve the desired result"; "a common desire to get at the facts and a common desire to help things"—and so on. Just strings of windy bubbles, floating on a morass of verbiage. One bubble was not so gaseous as its fellows, but Mr. Baldwin did not know it. It was the text of his discourse: "I want to plead for a truce." This, beyond a doubt, is a direct admission of the existence of a state of industrial war. Socialists have been engaged in pointing this out for upwards of a century. We call it the class struggle. In spite of Mr. Baldwin's candid admission, you will find its existence regularly denied at least once a week. For what is a truce? An agreed temporary peace between belligerents. And who are the belligerents? Mr. Baldwin defined them in his opening sentences. We should have said "Capital and Labour," or the "Workers versus the Parasites," the "Rich versus the Poor," or something equally trite and explicit. Mr. Baldwin phrased it differently. He said, "This country would be confronted more and more with great combines and great aggregations of labour." And now, he said, when there seemed a faint hope of revival, we were confronted with a gathering storm

which, if it burst, would blot out all prosperity. "All prosperity"! So there is some prosperity about somewhere. Are we very far wrong in assuming that the struggle the truce is to suspend is concerned with this prosperity and its position on the wrong side of the line? We know it is not on the workers' side. Mr. Baldwin, therefore, must be speaking for the other, the masters'. Behind the homely, pathetic figure of Mr. Baldwin we discern, without the aid of binoculars, the sinister figures of his employers. Ruthless, callous, malignant, and vindictive, the phalanx of capitalism is packed at his back. And having battered the workers to the edge of endurance, their spokesman suggests a truce. One feels tempted to reply:

Mr. Baldwin and Friends,—We are deeply touched by your moving appeal for a truce in our embittered relations. Naturally a peace-loving, easy-going crowd, we are not entirely unsympathetic. But there are certain facts which seem to have escaped your notice. We would remind you that in ten short years you have succeeded in burying a million of us beneath Flanders' mud, and in maiming a further million or two preparatory to returning us to civil life. That civil life contains elements we do not consider altogether satisfactory. A million and a quarter of us seem condemned to perpetual unemployment. You endeavour to keep us from becoming troublesome by a niggardly, inadequate sum to which you attach the insulting term "the dole." Those of us fortunate enough to find masters have had our wages battered down to a point inconsistent with a full and joyous existence. Your promise of a land fit for heroes was a mockery; of better education for our children, a bitter jest. You cannot even house us. Your pleas of poverty and lack of funds are falsified by the millions found for rebuilding banks, stores, and offices on the most valuable sites in London; by the millions found annually for battle-ships and armies; by the constant over-subscription of gilt-edged loans. And we are sick of it. We are tired at playing Lazarus at the feast we have provided. We are— But we said one feels TEMPTED to reply in those terms. One quickly realises that he and his masters would be as deeply impressed by our oratorical flourishes as we are by theirs. We remember that "the

rich will do anything for the poor, except get off their backs." That is our sole concern—to get the rich off our backs. Speeches have their uses, but they will not do that. It is action that counts, and when the workers decide to act intelligently and with knowledge they will not be fobbed off with speeches. Prosperity for the rich and poverty for the poor are inseparable. The one is the consequence of the other. To talk of a truce in such circumstances is to imply that we enjoy being robbed. There can be no truce between those who live by robbery, and their victims. The only concession one can make is to recognise that the division of society into two warring classes does not proceed from human wickedness or simple perversity. But it has proceeded from traceable historic causes, and having discovered its laws of growth, we can now guide the progress of society into a more harmonious form, wherein classes shall cease to exist, and class-war have no place. This is the mission of the working class, and by joining the Socialist Party each can take a part in inaugurating the new human society.

W. T. H.

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## THE RICHES OF THE WORKING CLASS!!

The newspapers have discovered that the workers are capitalists. Since March 18th, when Mr. Runciman, the Liberal Capitalist, made his speech on "The Distribution of Wealth," the Press has waxed eloquent about the "enormous" number of capitalists and the wealth of the workers.

Figures such as Mr. Runciman gave are similar in kind to those supplied for many years to attempt to show that the mass of the people are not propertyless.

In his speech before the United Kingdom Provident Institution, Mr. Runciman said that the amount of the Post Office Savings Bank deposits was 280 million pounds at the end of 1924. This sum was held by 12,300,000 people. A simple sum in division will show that the vast savings of these 12 million people amount to about £23 per head. So that these lucky people with a bank book have amassed the enormous wealth of £23 as their life savings.

Assuming them to be workers, these "savings" are insufficient to tide over one of the periods of sickness or unemployment to which workers and their families are subject. To call these paltry sums "investments," as Mr. Runciman does, is a capitalist joke. The fact that the sum per head in the Post Office Bank is so small is in itself an indictment of the system. The paltry amount "saved" by the industrious would not pay for an employer's "night out."

Mr. Runciman gave further figures showing that about 2 millions had £40 per head in the Trustee Savings Banks. This Liberal statesman omitted to state that both in the Post Office and Trustee Savings Bank there were a large number of depositors who were petty tradesmen and shopkeepers and not members of the working class.

In order to pile up the figures, Mr. Runciman took the total amount of Government War Stock issued by the Post Office since 1914, amounting to 239 million pounds. The fact is well known that a very large number of the original holders of War Stock have been compelled to sell it, so that a large amount of it is owned now by banks and other companies. After making other "estimates" and "conjectures," our

figure juggler arrived at the conclusion that 15 millions had a grand total of savings in these banks, etc., amounting to 777 millions. These "fifteen million capitalists," as Mr. Runciman called them, had therefore an average of about £52 "saved"!

A week before, one of the leading Conservative papers (the "Evening Standard," March 11th, 1925) presented some facts which dispel the "rosy dreams" inspired by Mr. Runciman's figures.

Mr. Lort Williams, K.C., late Tory M.P. for Rotherhithe, and now Recorder of West Bromwich, is the writer of the article, from which we quote the following extracts:—

One-and-a-half millions of willing, able-bodied working people cannot earn the means to live. The law forbids them to work. They may not build themselves houses, nor grow their own food, nor make their tools, nor clothe themselves. They may not even anticipate death. The only right which the law gives them is a claim to a charitable dole just sufficient to sustain life, but in a country teeming with wealth no part of it is theirs. A further two million people are dependent on the Poor Law, and one million are qualified by poverty to draw the pittance of an old age pension. According to Professor Henry Clay, 2½ million people out of a population of 47½ millions own the entire wealth of the country.

Ten years ago the national income was £2,000 million. One million persons had incomes over £160 per annum, and their aggregate income was £1,000 million, or half the entire national income. Half the land of the British Isles is owned by 2,500 persons. Out of £300 million left at death in one year 4,400 persons owned £212 million. Out of 670,000 persons who died, 594,000 left nothing or under £100. To-day these monstrous discrepancies of fortune are even worse. If a future Labour Government orders a Capital Levy on estates over £1,000, 95 per cent. of the electorate will be untouched by such taxation.

This supporter of the Tory Government makes admissions which show the intense exploitation of the producers of wealth. But we will not rely on the evidence of this politician alone. We quote below an extract from Professor Clay, who holds the Chair of Political Economy at Manchester University. This Professor wrote to "The Times," objecting to Mr. Runciman's figure juggling:—

The figures given by Mr. Runciman in his address of March 18 hardly justify either the inferences drawn from them or the complacent attitude towards the existing distribution of capital that they have encouraged. They give the amount of certain investments in the hands of the poor; the inferences drawn are that the

distribution of capital is wider than it used to be, and that the alleged concentration of wealth in few hands is no longer in fact the case.

Before such inferences can be safely drawn, we require to know, not only the amount of a particular investment by a section of the nation, but the amount of all accumulated wealth in the hands of all classes; and, further, to know its distribution, both at the present time and in the previous age with which the present is so favourably contrasted. Mr. Runciman did not attempt to give us this information and, in the absence of it, it is difficult to accept his claim that the distribution is "better than at any period in our history." The distribution of property is closely connected with the form of economic organisation of a country; and 18th century England, with its small farmers and master-craftsmen, must have shown a much wider distribution of capital than England today—just as contemporary France and Ireland do.

Whether the tendency is in the direction of greater equality of distribution or not, progress in that direction has not been great. What Mr. Runciman calls "the stupendous total of £777,834,000" is not more than 5 per cent of the national capital—not a large proportion to be held by "15 million capitalists." On the other hand, allowing a considerable margin for error, it is probably safe to say that over two-thirds of the national capital is held by less than 2 per cent. of the people.—*The Times*, March 24, 1925.

In glaring contrast to the lie of a wide distribution of wealth are the plain facts of industrial life. The ever-growing strength and influence of the vast limited companies and industrial magnates, to which even the Premier drew attention, is one phase of modern economic life which shows the hopeless plight of the worker. The records shown month by month in official figures of the decline in wages in the main industries is another fact of the increasing poverty of the wage-slave.

On this point Sir Chiozza Money wrote ("The People's Year Book," 1924):—

In the middle of 1923 it is probably true that a considerable proportion of wage earners are earning less, money's worth for money's worth, than they did in 1913.

Progress under capitalism means prosperity for the few. In spite of all the reforms of the three capitalist parties in Parliament, the gulf between worker and employer widens. It widens with the very rise in the workers' efficiency. One effect of the deep poverty of the workers was shown by the Secretary for War (March 16th, 1925) in introducing the Army Estimates, when he said that five out of every eight recruits for the Army had to be re-

jected on grounds of health and physique.

So not only are the workers robbed of the wealth produced, but they are robbed of health through the conditions of their life and labour. There is no remedy under private or State ownership. The progress of the producer will begin with the establishment of common ownership.

A. KOHN.

## CATHOLICISM AND SOCIALISM.

### MR. WHEATLEY'S LIE.

In the "Daily Herald" (March 23rd) Mr. Wheatley defended the Catholic Church against the charge of being anti-Socialist. His argument took the following form. The Catholic Church does not oppose State ownership as advocated by the Labour Party; the Labour Party is a Socialist party; therefore, the Catholic Church does not oppose Socialism.

In this Mr. Wheatley is using his customary jesuitical method of reasoning. Of course the Church does not oppose State capitalism; why should it? But as Mr. Wheatley himself showed ("The Catholic Working Man") the Pope and the Church do oppose the abolition of private ownership. The latter means the end of exploitation, while the former merely makes the State the direct instrument of exploitation. The capitalists as bondholders still control production.

He says:—

It is merely playing with words to differentiate between the Labour Party and the British Socialist Party.

Unfortunately for him, Mr. Wheatley declared ("Forward," November 3rd, 1923):—

There is no good blinking the fact that the policy pronounced at Plymouth will seriously strain the Labour Party. It would not do so if it were a Socialist Party. But it isn't.

He omitted to mention or deal with the fact that the only organisation in Great Britain, calling itself the Socialist Party, opposes the Catholic and every other religion.

He is reported to have stated last year at a public meeting at Barlanark, that "The Roman Catholic Church is the Church of the Proletariat." What he no doubt really means is that the Catholic Church promises him security as an exploiter of labour.

H.

## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS.

### Their Influence on Political Institutions.

In one of the most valuable passages in his writings, Marx says: "The sum total of (the) relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness" (Intro., "Critique of Political Economy").

By thus conceiving society as made up of a foundation structure and a superstructure, he achieved an advance of great value for the future progress of sociology. Yet no one was more fully aware than Marx that a society is an organic whole, that, though its several aspects for purposes of understanding can be separated in thought, in concrete reality they are interwoven and interdependent.

The relation of the economic basis to the superstructure is readily made clear by considering man's social institutions as means adopted for the solution of the manifold problems that have faced him in the course of his history. His economic institutions are a solution to the problems of physical self-maintenance under given geographical, technical and historical conditions; his moral, disciplinary, political and military institutions are a response to the problems his economic system has created, and meet secondary needs made imperative, because he has become as dependent upon his economic methods as a lion upon its teeth and claws.

The chief of these secondary social problems are those arising from the division of social labour and function, and from the distribution of wealth. Where working and leisured classes have become inseparable from the economic arrangements in society the problem of repressing and overpowering the resistance of the subjected calls for permanent social machinery of coercion under the control of the exploiting class. When private ownership of wealth has become established the problem of protecting and enforcing this "right" necessitates special disciplinary institutions. Class-antagonism and private property thus underlie the structure of the state and the exact form of its structure varies with the nature of the class division and the forms of property prevailing.

## IDEAS IN HISTORY.

Many of his ill-informed or dishonest critics have declared that Marx belittled the role of ideas in history, whereas, in actual fact, he explained their source and showed their very real social function, thus allowing them a significance and value which they could never have in a philosophy of history that regarded ideas as spontaneous generations of the "world of the spirit," having no roots in the physical conditions of life.

To every institution and social habit there corresponds a definite group of ideas. The very base of the economic system—its productive technique—has its mental as well as its material aspect. Inseparable from the actual instruments of production is the technical knowledge necessary to make and use them. How vital this knowledge is may be vividly realised by imagining a modern machine in the hands of savages. They might break it up for spear-heads or nose-ornaments or perhaps worship it—but they would certainly not use it as it was made to be used. On the other hand, should the machines of a modern community be suddenly destroyed, if the technical knowledge remained it would be possible to reproduce them, though the process might be prolonged and difficult.

Economic relations and the institutions of the superstructure have their mental aspects also, which Marx terms the "social consciousness." It consists of the general system of beliefs, assumptions, moral judgments and sentiments current in a community. In the literature of an age this consciousness finds expression in its best defined and most systematic form.

Just as little as the savage can comprehend and make use of the machine, can he understand and play a part in the social arrangements of civilised life. His ideology belongs to a different system of institutions, and he finds in the strange environment of civilisation his most sacred sentiments scorned and his cherished beliefs as to what is possible and impossible, right and wrong, contradicted before his eyes.

The beliefs current in a society may be said to be the outcome of its intellectual problems arising from the material conditions. They answer the inescapable questions as to "why" and "how" to the full satisfaction of the people who hold them. They "justify" and provide

"reasons" for accepted customs and institutions.

The opinions and superstitions of an age naturally appear to that age the essence of truth and reason and, if, as is usually the case, social institutions fully accord therewith, then they are held to be the only ways of living that are natural, practicable, reasonable and just. Thus the "vicious circle" of ideas and institutions completes itself.

A social system consists of a body of interdependent institutions and ideas. The productive institutions form the basis but, just as the foundation of a piece of architecture would be incomplete and useless without the edifice that it upholds, so the basic economic relations do not and cannot satisfy all human needs and are never found, because they cannot exist, without a supplementary superstructure.

#### EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION.

Like all things, however, a social system is a growth. Gradually, from relatively formless and indefinable beginnings it acquires an increasingly complex and coherent structure as a result of constant modifications and adaptations to the problems of its existence.

It is in observing the growth of a system that the primary nature of the economic sub-structure is most vividly apparent. Invariably it is found that the technical and other material conditions of production change first; that corresponding with this goes a change in the economic relations of the members of society, followed, sooner or later, by the adaptation thereto of the intellectual, moral, political and legal edifice.

This "sooner or later" is important, for it is the delay in adaptation that is responsible for the historic eras of rapid revolutionary transformation which mark history off into the fairly sharply defined social epochs that enable us to speak of the "succession of systems" without contradicting the truth of "the continuity of social change."

One cause of the intermittent nature of social evolution lies in the conservatism of the human mind. Man withstands change and clings to old habits of thought and behaviour long after their original necessity has gone, and until new necessities cause a stimulus to movement too powerful for

his further resistance. In class-divided communities, however, another highly effective factor is the control exercised by the dominant class over the institutions wielding moral and mental influence and over the political forces of coercion. By the use of these instruments the ruling class endeavours to stem the tide of social change that will dislodge it from its pre-eminence. Up to a certain point its powers prevail, but the governing class can only postpone, it cannot escape the day of its nemesis.

When through industrial evolution the needs of the productive system are no longer met by the legal and political forms prevailing, the problems pressing for solution enforce themselves upon the consciousness of masses of men, and particularly upon the class who control and live by the newer economic methods. After a more or less prolonged period of conflict with the dominant class, during which revolutionary theories are elaborated, the class of progress acquires political strength to break the resistance of the class of stagnation, to achieve the social adaptations in which its interests lie and to usher in a new social order.

Of the several great systems in social history one of the best defined and widespread is that known as "patriarchalism," which the reader will find well yet concisely described in Jenks' "Short History of Politics." Wherever patriarchal conditions of life are found, whether amongst the early Jews or Greeks or, amongst the Arabs and Hindus of to-day, we discover productive and property institutions, family relationships, customs, traditions and religious forms of great similarity. A further system that arose out of patriarchalism and developed on a basis of chattel-slavery is that best seen in the Græco-Roman civilisation. Another very definite type exhibiting considerable uniformity all over Mediæval Europe and existing in recent Japan was the feudal system. Lastly, we have the form of society which dominates at the present time perhaps the greater part of mankind—the capitalist system.

#### "OUR CIVILISATION."

Modern capitalist society is sometimes described simply as a form of production, but this is a mistake, for in it are involved all those institutions, usages and conceptions peculiar to present-day civilisation.

Wherever modern industrialism takes root there we invariably find springing up its corresponding superstructure, because the problems that it propounds are everywhere very similar and everywhere have been met in substantially the same way.

On its political side, undoubtedly the outstanding feature of bourgeois society is—representative government. One by one, as modern industry has seized them in its grip, we have seen age-old "despotic" states—Japan, Turkey, Persia—adopting the political machinery of the more advanced capitalist groups. There is in fact no case on record of capitalist production achieving any considerable development without representative institutions being set up.

In its social consciousness—its general fabric of ideas—modern society is very characteristic and differs markedly from hitherto existing systems. One of its striking features is the universal adoration for such abstract ideas as "liberty" and "equality," for the principle of "individualism" and for the idea of "progress."

It is well to remember how completely foreign to earlier historic systems such institutions and ideas are. Even where some degree of similarity seems to exist—as in the democratic councils of tribal communities—this disappears on examination. The democracy of the clan and the tribe was based upon blood-kinship and common and equal rights in the sources of subsistence. The community was a small exclusive brotherhood, hostile to outsiders and maintaining its coherence and identity by a rigid regard for custom and tradition, rendering the idea of individual independence unthinkable. The tribesman conceived himself as an inseparable part of his group. The tribe thought and acted almost as a unit and, in its assemblies, only unanimous votes were effective.

Bourgeois democracy, on the contrary, involves the idea of the "rights and liberties" of the individual. Before this idea could arise, the concept of the individual as an entity separate from society, had first to be evolved, and this was only possible or could only become—a general conception after the individual had in reality become the unit of society by the dissolution of tribal, village and family bonds and corporate life.

The detailed regulations and formalities

enforced by custom and religious tradition that governed the productive and every other sphere of activity in patriarchal and, to a lesser degree, in feudal society, would seem ridiculous and intolerable to one whose life had been spent in the competitive, "free" world of capitalism, with its individualism and its doctrine of "mind your own business." Conventions and traditions still exist—they are a necessity to social life—but capitalism gets along with what would seem the absolute minimum were it not for the fact that their hold appears to grow day by day.

Moreover, it is down at the very basis that emancipation from convention is most complete, for, in present-day production, the age-old domination of custom has been utterly swept away. Untrammelled industry, free commerce, unrestricted exploitation of man and material, are the economic ideals of capitalism, and they have been as nearly achieved as concrete realities will allow.

The slogan of to-day is not "walk in the ways of thy fathers," but, "go-ahead," "evolution," "progress." The very conception of "progress" and its elevation to a moral principle is a product of capitalism and something new to history. As Clodd says in his "Primitive Man": "Progress is a modern idea—a Western idea. The Orientals, from whom we may now except the Japanese, hate it. As Sir Henry Maine says in his 'Popular Government,' 'the entire Mohammedan world detests it. The multitude of coloured men who swarm in the continent of Africa detest it. The millions on millions of men who fill the Chinese Empire loathe it, and, what is more, despise it.'" (P. 195.)

R. W. HOUSELY.

(To be continued.)

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1925

**THE LABOUR PARTY BETRAYS THE UNEMPLOYED.**

None of the three parties, Liberal, Labour, Conservative, has solved or can solve the problem of unemployment. All three stand for capitalism, with only minor disagreements on policy and administration, and unemployment cannot be abolished while capitalism remains. But in addition to making promises which they could not fulfil, each has also promised to make the condition of the unemployed "tolerable." This they could do, and have all failed to do. The Labour Party was, and is, particularly forward in parading its sympathy with the innocent victims of capitalism, and in the present House of Commons some Labour M.P.'s have attacked a new regulation which will deny unemployment pay to many who have been out of work the longest. To their protests on this, as on nearly every other matter, the Conservatives are able to reply by pointing out that they are only continuing the policy of the Labour Party when it was in office. As Ellen Wilkinson remarks ("Lansbury's Labour Weekly," Feb. 28, 1925):—

It is, of course, distinctly aggravating for the female Labour Member to be referred to the actions of her own Government last year as a justification for anything that she objects to the Conservatives doing.

But, aggravating or not, it happens to be true.

Thus Brailsford, in the "New Leader" (March 13th), says of the new Circular:—

Even before this tightening process began, 120,000 persons were deprived of benefit since August last year, and to this total about 30,000 will now be added.

The Labour Party, through whose action the dole has been stopped from 120,000 persons, cannot very well throw stones at their successors, who have not yet reached a quarter of that total.

Mr. George Lansbury contributed, among others, to the unemployment debates (Hansard, March 9th, 1925). His proposal was to give every young man between 18 and 25 the choice between starvation and working on the land. If they refused to work at a "fair wage," he would not let them have a farthing. At present agricultural wages are, many of them, in the neighbourhood of 30s. for a man of 21, with lower rates for those below that age. Two years ago, when Mr. J. R. MacDonald "settled" a strike of Norfolk landworkers, he obtained for them a "fair wage" of 25s. Mr. Lansbury is apparently satisfied that a man ought to be allowed to starve who refuses exhausting work for long hours on the land, work, too, for which most of the unemployed are quite unfitted both by training and through semi-starvation if they have been long out of work. Yet with the Communists and other so-called "left-wingers" Lansbury passes as a Socialist.

But the proposal is foolish as well as being anti-working-class. There are already landworkers unemployed. If, therefore, more agricultural produce is to be grown and thrown on the market, prices will fall and still more land will go out of cultivation, and men at present working will lose their jobs. A possible alternative is that the produce be used to maintain the unemployed instead of being sold. This, however, immediately raises the question of cost. As it happens, the capitalist class have so far been of the opinion, and probably correctly, that the system of doles and relief is the cheapest possible one for them.

The unemployed have to be kept from sheer starvation, and the capitalists have to foot the bill. They may pay a man 18s. to do nothing, or set him to work on the land, but if they do the latter it costs them much more than 18s. A man working hard

eats more, wears out more clothes, and must have better clothes and boots, as well as tools, machinery, etc. Rent would need to be paid and, in short, it is fairly certain that the dole is cheaper and that the capitalists do know more about this aspect of capitalism than do the Labour amateurs who are so anxious to administer the system for them. This is but one of the many brilliant futilities offered by the Labour Party to solve what is within capitalism insoluble.

**A REVIEW OF "THE DIPLOMACY OF MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD."**

(Price 3d. *Labour Monthly*, 162, Buckingham Palace Road.)

This pamphlet is a reprint of two articles from the "Labour Monthly." The writer, "U. D. C.," who appears to be well informed on the inner history of the Labour Party during its term of office, sums up the record of promises to the workers which were broken, and instructions from the exploiters which were obeyed. He writes convincingly of MacDonald's personal weaknesses, his vanity and idleness, and his all-round futility in detailed administrative work or complex negotiations. He shows MacDonald in an amusing light posing as the man of iron when he declared at a private meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party in a discussion of possible German opposition to the Dawes Scheme, "We shall make her accept."

He is said to have defended this treatment of Germany on the ground that "it was necessary to place a heavy Reparation burden on Germany in order to handicap German industries which otherwise might prove dangerous competitors" (page 11). This remark startled his listeners, for, as "U. D. C." points out, "Many had doubted the quality of his Socialism; but the purity of his Liberalism had always been counted above suspicion."

While there is a certain good purpose served by combating the silly hero worship to which the workers are so prone, one cannot but observe that "U. D. C.'s" own point of view is dangerously limited. Granted that MacDonald "funked" and never seriously tried to withstand the pressure to which he was subjected, would the outcome have been different if he had?

Does "U. D. C." really imagine that a

"strong" Labour Premier placed in office at the pleasure of Liberals and Tories could have defied the orders of his capitalist masters? And what is more, would his own party have backed him up?

If, like "U. D. C.," we are to regard the matter as one of personalities, why should a place-hunting Labour Leader offend the capitalists when he knows full well that he has no solid class-conscious body of workers behind him to make his protest effective? Those, like "U. D. C." who look upon international politics as an affair of "strong men," in which loyalty to "open diplomacy," honesty and goodwill and all the rest of the liberal catch-words of the I.L.P. and the Union of Democratic Control will solve all problems, are as much responsible as MacDonald for the foolish hopes and bitter disappointment felt by working-class supporters of Labour in Office. They are, moreover, doing little to teach the real nature of the problems.

It is also difficult to see why "U. D. C." should write as if MacDonald's defection is a matter for surprise. To the serious student his actions after, during and before the war are all equally damning evidence that he was always a careerist, and never anything but a danger to the working class.

H.

**Our TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE** will be held on April 10th and 11th, 1925, at Fairfax Hall, Stanhope Gardens, Haringay, London, N. The proceedings are open to the public, and commence at 10 a.m. on both days.

A Re-Union of Members and Friends will be held on the first evening (Good Friday). Tickets 1/-. Doors open 7 p.m. Commences 7.30 p.m. Come along!

**AN INVITATION.**

Will Member and sympathisers living in or around Carshalton, Surrey, communicate with the Head Office—

17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1.

with a view to forming a Branch in that District

### THE CAPITALIST AND HIS CASE.

The Socialist argues that in the typical capitalist industry of the twentieth century, the proprietor or proprietors have degenerated into mere receivers of dividends, and are therefore no longer a necessary part of the organisation for producing and distributing wealth. This does not involve any condemnation on "moral" grounds either of the system or of the capitalist class, nor does it prevent us from recognising the great historical role played in the past by the revolutionary capitalists when they struggled to clear Europe of the encumbrance of decrepit Feudalism. But the capitalists, like their Feudal predecessors, have overstayed their welcome, and the duty falls upon the workers of preparing for further progress by removing the encumbrances of this age and generation.

There is no lack of capitalist apologists willing, and in their own opinion able, to justify the system and the privileged position of those who benefit by it. Let us then examine some of the more familiar arguments.

First of all, there are those who tell us that the capitalist works just like any member of the working class and that his income is as much "earned" as are the worker's wages. If this were true, it would not justify the enormous inequality between the one income and the other, and would not explain how it is that the capitalist is frequently able to live in luxury and yet increase his wealth, while the worker has barely sufficient to live in modest comfort and can usually save nothing at all. In fact, it is not true, except in small concerns and in certain unimportant industries, where the small concern still holds its own. In large-scale industry the shareholder does not work. The ordinary shareholder is not even permitted by law to interfere in the conduct of the limited company in which he invests his money. No one would be more surprised than the investor in railway stock if it were suggested to him that he take his turn along with porters or cleaners on the line. He probably knows and desires to know nothing about the unpleasant processes associated with the running of "his" business. It is absurd on the face of it to suppose that investments made thousands of miles away from the residence of the investor, yield an income because of

the work done by the investor. When financial failures and frauds bring into court such men as Bevan, of the City Equitable, no surprise is felt when a managing director declares that he is ignorant of managerial duties and pays someone else—a member of the working class—to perform them in his name. This brings us to a special type of work concerned with organising production. Our apologist says that, while it may be true the capitalists do not nowadays actually work alongside their employees, they still provide the brains and directive ability.

This claim is, of course, as false as the other. Granted that some men have organising powers approaching genius, and that some of these men happen to belong to the employing class, it is a sheer physical impossibility for, say, the late Hugo Stinnes to organise and direct literally hundreds of concerns of the most varied nature operating in all parts of Central Europe and with world interconnections employing a million and a half hands. To master all the technical processes of one of the industries would more than tax the powers of any man. Moreover, if so much depended on the brains of the proprietor, his removal by death would—but does not—bring chaos. It does not, because salaried officials (members of the working class) can and do master the specialised work of direction just as they do any other trade. So plain is this that one of the most noted defenders of capitalism, the Austrian economist, Bohm-Bawerk, readily admits it. In his "Capital and Interest" (Macmillan, 1890, page 1) he writes about interest on invested money in the following terms:—

It owes its existence to no personal activity of the capitalist and flows to him even where he has not moved a finger in its making. He further asked, but never answered, the question, "Whence and why does the capitalist without personally exerting himself obtain this endless flow of wealth?"

When it is argued that the capitalist owes his superior position to his superior brains, we would also like to ask one question: If it is his brains and not his property which make him privileged, and in view of the fact that his brains will remain at his service, why does the property owner so strenuously resist attempts to take his property from him? The apologist often assures us that even under Socialism we could not keep the brainy capitalist down in the ranks of the

common herd, but his determination not to take the risk gives the lie to his words. A recent illustration will help to drive home the absurdity of this position. A New Yorker named Suydam was left 50,000 dollars by his father fifty years ago. Last year he died worth 1,000,000 dollars, and for the whole fifty years Mr. Suydam lived in a lunatic asylum, mentally unable to direct his own or anyone else's affairs. Whence then this increase of 950,000 dollars? Labour, directive ability, of course. But whose labour and whose directive ability? Not Mr. Suydam's, but those of the workers employed in concerns in which Suydam, Senior, had invested the money.

Then we are told that the capitalist "saves," and thus makes future production possible. In answer, we cannot do better than quote Sir W. Ashley, a Conservative historian and economist of note:—

Senior, in 1835, introduced the term "abstinence," as more fitly expressing the source of capital. . . . He characterised abstinence as implying "self-denial," and declared that "to abstain from the enjoyment which is in our power" is "among the most painful exertions of the human will." Phrases like these have occasioned no little mirth; it is hard to discover self-denial or parsimony as the world understands those words, in the processes by which modern capital is most largely accumulated."—(Economic Organisation of England, p. 157.)

Under Socialism provision would naturally be made by society as a whole for future developments of plant, etc., instead of, as now, handsomely rewarding a favoured few because they cannot consume or waste the whole of the proceeds of their robbery of the wealth producers.

The greatest and most impudent stand-by of the capitalist economist is the "risk," which needs to be paid for. The very real risks from industrial accident run by miners and railwaymen and others count for nothing in this argument. They were in the past permitted to occur without any penalty for negligence or liability for compensation resting on the employer, until it was found that this was really an expensive method, despite its appearance of cheapness. Throw-outs on the industrial scrap heap simply became burdens on the Poor Law, and in the long run prevention was cheaper than indifference. Thus do our masters make a virtue of their meanness and boast of their humanity when their pocket induces some capitalist reform. But the capitalist is

supposed to run the risk of losing his capital, and this is said to justify his being paid his profits. Now what is the basis of this argument? The Socialist replies that it is merely a man-made law which protects capitalist private property, and we propose, of course, to terminate such laws when we control the machinery of government. The capitalist, on the other hand, says, or at least believes, that we are here concerned with some law or vital principle of nature in accordance with which risks are rewarded. This is nonsense. The man who jumps off Waterloo Bridge runs the risk of being drowned. Does he for that reason anticipate being rewarded by Nature? If he selected the Monument he would run the risk (so great as to be almost certainty) of breaking his neck. Would he expect some compensation commensurate with the risk? And to come nearer to the actual conditions of industry, compare two possessors of £10,000; one of whom invests his money in some safe stock, Government Loan, for instance, while the other keeps his at home. The latter would run great risk from burglary, while the former would run no appreciable risk of loss at all. Yet at the end of a year the man who risked nothing would be wealthier by the amount of the interest, and the man who risked much would be no better off. Capitalist practice disposes of the risk theory.

We are also told that the capitalist advances capital to the worker over the period which passes before the product of the latter's labour is completed, and thus the capitalist aids production and earns his reward. But here again capitalist usage refutes the argument. It is customary for weekly, monthly and even many yearly contracts to be so framed that the workers do not receive their pay until *after* they have put in their agreed amount of work. In truth then it is the worker who *advances* his service to his employer. And, moreover, how does the capitalist himself live in the meantime, except on the food, clothing, etc., produced by the labour of other workers?

A defence of private property of which we still occasionally hear is that it is a "Divine" institution and must not be touched. We might be more ready to believe that those who use this, do so sincerely, if they demonstrated their con-

fidence in their "omnipotent God" by trusting him to look after his own. Instead they behave just like any non-believer and employ policemen, soldiers and sailors to protect their property for them. We are compelled therefore to assume that this relic of a day when religious "dope" was more effective than now, is intended to deceive the unwary.

A whole tribe of defenders of private property concentrate on the alleged social virtues which with culture and learning are the monopoly of a leisured ruling class. The argument fails for three reasons, if for no others. In the first place the monotonous series of disclosures in the law courts of the filthy intrigues and low standards of the "upper ten" do not bear out the assumption that leisure to cultivate necessarily results in cultivation of social virtues. In the second place neither learning nor artistic achievement and appreciation are by any means confined to the wealthy, in spite of certain decided advantages they enjoy. And lastly there is no such thing as an hereditary and exclusive ruling class. Every revolution in industrial processes brings some new section of property owner to the fore and the blue-blooded and effete aristocrat of one century is invariably the descendant at a few removes of the upstart new-rich of the century before. What education and surroundings can do for the few we propose to make possible for the many.

These and other futilities produced by the profound thought of professors of economics are the kind of thing they offer in the name of economic science. The stagnation of economic thought is due largely to the necessity felt by university lecturers of pleasing those, whether Governments or private companies, who endow these "educational" establishments. The stagnation was foreseen by Marx, whose work they all agree to decry (the only thing they can agree upon), and their capitalist bias was admitted in a letter to "The Times" (March 11th) by E. J. P. Benn, a publisher of economic works. He writes of Cannan, Mallock, H. D. Henderson, etc., as "writers whose object is the defence . . . of the existing order of things."

Their inability is well illustrated by the consequences of the recent war. All the economists of Allied and Central powers were quite unable to forecast in even the most elementary way the effect of war on

prices, production, currency and trade. Even now, seven years after the Peace, when the gold standard is returning to Europe, they still have not made up their minds whether it was ever necessary to depart from it. They have not even been able to agree on an explanation for the rise of prices. The capitalists who imagine that social progress will cease at the strange medley of commands issuing from the professors are in truth relying on a broken reed.

H.

### THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

(By R. Neft. 16 pages. Price 2d. James Davies & Co., Llanelly.)

Mr. R. Neft is a Labour candidate who vainly tries to persuade himself that he can at the same time be a Socialist. A previous pamphlet on the Capital Levy was noticed in these pages. It was almost worthless because of Mr. Neft's lack of understanding of the structure and working of the capitalist system. He has improved. For instance, he has now learned that for practical purposes there are in developed capitalist society only two classes—the propertyless, who work, and the propertied, who live by owning. At least, he knew this up to page 13, and there he falls back into his old habit of writing about "all classes."

His pamphlet is an attempt to give a simple sketch of the development of the means of production in human history, and the parallel growth of forms of ownership and social systems. He shows how exploitation came into existence, but he makes a serious omission in not describing the corresponding political evolution. Had he shown how the capitalists won and keep their position as a ruling class, he would perhaps have seen the glaring inconsistency of his own position. When we realise that the workers *must* gain political power before they can establish Socialism, we see also the impossibility of a Socialist giving support to the Labour Party which seeks power for numerous purposes but not for Socialism. We have often enough shown that that Party's principles are anti-Socialist, and we invite Mr. Neft to prove that the Labour Party is committed to the abolition of the exploitation of the workers by the property owners.

He quotes Marx extensively, but quite fails to appreciate the Marxian view of the class struggle. He is pleased because

"merchant-middlemen and shopkeepers" are swelling "Labour's right wing" (page 7), yet he must know, as Marx knew, that these people are in the worst sense reactionary. They fight—when they fight at all, and don't merely whine—to win back "pure" small-scale capitalism. They want us to assist them in staying capitalist economic development. They are the last people to desire the abolition of the system. We look forward; they look back.

Mr. Neft believes (page 10) that when once they learn of the existence of the class struggle, the capitalists will "join the Socialists." This is untrue, and contrary to Marx, whom he quotes with evident approval. Allowing for some exceptional individuals, the more clearly the capitalists recognise their own interests, the more determinedly will they organise to protect their class privileges and resist attacks on capitalism. They will continue to associate their interests with the welfare of society as a whole.

What misleads Mr. Neft is the capitalist support he sees increasingly going to his party. Some day perhaps he will realise why this is happening. It is because the capitalists are coming to believe that the Labour Party really is, what it boasts of being, "not a class party," but the "only bulwark against revolution."

Mr. Neft's confusion is shown by his absurd statement that the co-operative movement is one of the weapons of the class struggle (page 12). According to the Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies (see Labour Research Dept. Monthly Circular, February, 1925), the total wages bill of the co-operative societies for 1923 was £17 million, and their total surplus was no less than £16 million. While, according to the N.U.A.D.W., whose members have been involved in a wage dispute with the Leeds Co-operative Society, that society pays an average yearly wage of £123 per employee, and makes a profit of £203 per year per employee. These figures are for 1924 (see *Daily Herald*, March 5, 1925).

This is a rate of exploitation which would make Leverhulme's mouth water. Co-operative capitalism is worse than any other because of the sickening hypocrisy of its defenders, who masquerade as representatives of a higher morality than their fellow-sweaters.

Mr. Neft's economics are equally weak.

He says of Trade Unionism that "The capitalists are forced to give in on the union question, but are by no means defeated. They give advances in wages, and take back what they give by means of higher prices and unemployment." This is nonsense. Will he kindly tell us where and when he has met this queer type of capitalists who "give advances in wages." Our experience—and, I expect, Mr. Neft's experience also—is that the master class always and everywhere resist demands for more wages.

They sell at that price which gives them a maximum profit. Unless other conditions alter, a wage advance to their employees does not enable them to get compensation by raising prices. If it did, they would not resist wage claims. And will Mr. Neft explain why his capitalists were so philanthropic as to refrain from raising prices before wages went up?

This false theory was used with disastrous effect by the Labour Party and other defenders of capitalism during the war. It encourages among the workers the disgusting slave attitude of non-resistance to the attacks of the employing class.

Mr. Neft links Socialism up with Christianity, and says that we both preach "the brotherhood of man." We don't; we preach war against the capitalist class.

He says that trustification is the adoption by the capitalists of Socialist principles, and will eliminate competition. There is nothing of Socialism in large scale capitalist industry, and in widening the area of competition to great national groups it makes for a rivalry not less but more acute and deadly than before.

Finally, Mr. Neft calls himself a Socialist, and then defines Socialism as "vesting the ownership of . . . the means of production, distribution and exchange in the whole community" (page 16). Will he please explain what a Socialist community would need to do with wealth, in addition to producing it and distributing it?

Has it not occurred to him that exchange necessarily implies *private property*, and does he think that private ownership and Socialism can co-exist?

**LIFE-LIKE PORTRAITS OF MARX & ENGELS.**  
Handsome Cabinet Photographs suitable for framing. Price 1/6 the pair. Postage 3d. extra. To be had from S.P.G.B., 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1.

## SOCIALISM AND THE FIRE OF SPRING.

Mankind has always found in the return of Spring an occasion for rejoicing. Poets, musicians, artists have led the rout, and all have joined in the great re-awakening. The return of Proserpine finds its counterpart in most of the mythologies of our primitive ancestors. Even now when experience and the advance of knowledge have dethroned the deities, we love to poetically picture Nature's great renaissance as the return of a fresh and blooming goddess, garlanded with flowers and heralded by music. Francis Thompson sings:

"Cast wide the folding doorways of the East,  
For now is light increased!"

\* \* \*

"For lo, unto her house  
Spring is come home with her world-wandering feet,  
And all things are made young with young desires."

Nine hundred years ago Omar, the astronomer-poet of Persia, felt the spell, and amid the enchanted rose gardens of Misha-pur, called:

"Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of Spring,  
The winter garment of repentance fling."

Shakespeare with his—

"When daisies pied and violets blue,  
And lady smocks all silver white,  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight."

And Thomas Nash—

"Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king."  
all join in the chorus of welcome down the ages. And yet there is something about Francis Thompson—

"All things are made young with young desires."

Here, perhaps, we have the secret of perpetual youth—to retain our young desires. It is admittedly difficult to keep the fires of hope burning through an English winter, especially when followed by a summer like the last one. It is difficult to retain the potency and urge of youth through years of working-class apathy. But the death of desire is the death of oneself. When we cease to hope, and cease to work that our hope may be realised, there is nothing to do but wait for the undertaker.

This is not a lay sermon, a dissertation on Spring poetry, nor a call to repentance. It is intended to be a call to all who hold our views to take a leaf from the book of Mother Nature, and with the coming of Spring to renew their youth with young desires, and fling themselves into the battle once more. We are convinced there are thousands who are with us in everything but actual membership. These we would ask to remember that our fight is their fight, that our aim is utterly unrealisable without them. Socialism is not a system that will come of itself. It must be attained. We are convinced there is only one possible method of attainment—that of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Our method is the steady education of the workers in the principles of Socialism AND NOTHING LESS, and their democratic consent to every stage in the realisation of our object. It is not sufficient to label oneself a Socialist, or merely consider oneself a sympathiser and leave it at that.

"Lo! the Bird of Time is on the wing."

It is help we want, and that badly. We are anxious to make this our record year. We want to increase the size and reduce the price of our paper. We have a dozen pamphlets we should like to publish. We want funds to enable our speakers to operate thoroughly, and often, over a wider and wider area. We want to train and equip new speakers and writers. We want—we want a hundred things; but chiefly and above all we want Socialism. We shall not get Socialism until we get you. If you are thoroughly convinced of the desirability of Socialism and the logic of our method of attaining to it, your place is with us. Do not come in because you think something should be done for the suffering poor. Do not come in because you have a nice kind heart and feel charitably disposed towards your fellows. We are engaged in a grim struggle. The enemy will not go down before an onslaught of sentiment. Come in clear-eyed and clear-headed, knowing that you are part of the working class, knowing that your class is a subject class, held in bondage by a parasitic useless class, small but politically powerful; knowing that you can wrest that power from them, and then—and only then—can remould our world, "nearer to the heart's desire." Be "made young with young desires" and join the revolutionary army.

W. T. H.

## THE RED HERRING OF ANTI-FASCISM.

We have been asked by the "National Union for Combating Fascism" to sell their literature, including a monthly journal mis-called "The Clear Light." We certainly do not intend to do so.

The February issue alone is sufficient condemnation of the Union. They describe themselves as revolutionary Socialists; a claim which is directly negated by an hysterical 1,000 words of obscurity which appear as their manifesto. They reject the British Communists, but accept their anti-Marxist theory, according to which capitalism will in some mysterious way "collapse." Thus on page 1 we are told that "The day is dawning when the onus of choice will be flung upon the masses. . . ." But on page 2 we find that the workers "must be prepared . . . to overthrow the existing order." No one explains why the workers need organise to overthrow something which is going to collapse from its own weakness. They are sure that capitalism is weak, the proof being "its greater readiness to resort to Brute Force." In fact, as even the Communists have come to perceive, capitalism is stronger now than at any time this century, and does any serious student really believe that American capitalism is weaker than capitalism in England because its methods in home affairs are so much more brutal? Lack of experience and training, not weakness, explain this brutality. The American plutocracy has much to learn from our own more skilful ruling class.

The N.U.C.F. make the idiotic assertion that there are in Great Britain hundreds of thousands of "revolutionary Socialists" accepting the doctrines set out by Marx and Engels in the Communist manifesto. Why these hundreds of thousands do not organise into a Socialist party and why they refrain from expressing their views at the ballot-box are mysteries upon which a clear light might well be turned.

The editors are apparently not of the working class, but are some more of the insolent and ignorant superior people who will show us how it is to be done. "Let us unite, let us prepare the masses, the poor victims of the old order," is their modest programme.

They take pride in their "simple, clean,

direct open fight without hesitation and without compromise." But, like Humpty Dumpty, when they use a word it means just precisely what they want it to mean. "No compromise" means "Let all sections of the Movement hoist the white flag of truce between comrades."

Let us "provide a rallying point for the progressives of all shades of Labour, Socialist, Communist and Anarchist opinion. . . ." The notion of an organisation of Labour - Socialist - Communist - Anarchist-Progressives is one for ribald mirth, and the imagination simply refuses to conceive of the kind of "simple, clean, direct open fight" it would carry on. The Union thinks that "the advocacy of violence is reactionary." This is a curious declaration to be signed by anarchists and members of the S.D.F. and the Labour Party, for the only fight we remember them engaging in was the capitalist war of 1914, when they were of the opinion that violence on behalf of King Capital was the duty of the working class. We as Socialists are not prepared to compromise our opposition to defenders of capitalism masquerading as Labour parties, and we do not wish to obscure a plain issue by associating with members of anti-Socialist bodies.

The so-called Fascist danger is largely imaginary and not at all new. Capitalist violence is as old as capitalism, and the requirements of a Socialist policy have not been changed by the Mussolini episode. Fascist organisation in England can manage to exist mainly because unstable persons take them seriously and organise against them. Behind the rank and file of sincere but panicky people who join these freak parties, whether nominally "advanced" or "reactionary," are usually to be found numerous job-hunters moved by an itch to lay hands on donations and subscriptions. We need not discriminate between the personalities of the N.U.C.F., for as regards possible harm to the cause of Socialism there never was much to choose between the unscrupulous and the foggy-minded.

H.

## NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, 58 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amburst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A.L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 12, High Cross road, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Noel Park School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS**  
LONDON DISTRICT.

**Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.

**Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No. 249. VOL. 21.]

LONDON, MAY, 1925.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## DO WAGES DETERMINE PRICES?

The Socialist frequently encounters the illusion that prices of commodities generally are determined by, or in some way based upon, the wages of the workers producing those commodities. This illusion is common amongst members of all political parties to which we are opposed. Who has not met the Tory who regards strikes for higher wages as responsible for the high cost of living? or the Labourite who holds that strikes are useless because the capitalist can always recoup himself for an advance in wages by raising prices? In fact it is curious to note that the Tory and the Labourite both lead the worker to the same false move, i.e., the abandonment of the strike weapon. No Socialist exaggerates the value of that weapon, but likewise no Socialist is fool enough to propose to discard it under capitalism.

The illusion referred to rests upon ignorance of the economic laws of present-day capitalist society. The person suffering from the illusion regards wages and prices as quantities arbitrarily fixed, either by the workers or the capitalists, or both. Prices are conceived by him as a compound of wages plus other cost of production (raw material, machinery, etc.) plus a certain percentage of profit which is decided, apparently, by the capitalists' own sweet will; yet a moment's reflection should show that if the capitalist had the power to manipulate prices how and when he liked, there is no limit to the profit he would charge!

A reference to one well-established and widely-known fact should be sufficient to knock the bottom out of the fallacy. Soon after the outbreak of war in 1914 prices commenced to soar to a level 100 per cent.

to 200 per cent. above their starting point. Was this the effect of a rise in wages? Obviously not! Wages did not commence to rise till *after* the general rise in prices commenced. Wages rose in fact only because the rise in prices made it impossible for the workers to continue producing wealth with their diminished purchasing power. Was the rise in prices due to a sudden increase in the greed of the capitalists? Again the supposition is absurd. Capital's greed is constant. That which varies is the condition for its satisfaction. It was the alteration of this condition (i.e., the increased difficulties of production due to depletion of man-power in the factories, etc., coupled with the increased demands for various forms of wealth, munitions, etc., by the various States) which provided the reason for the rise.

One striking and important feature of this example, too, is this: that in spite of the national emergency and the impossibility of the workers living on the old wage, the wage rate rose only as a result of a struggle on the part of the workers themselves. This is the answer to our opponents of all shades who from time to time suggest that wages can be safely left to regulate themselves.

Having said this much, let us examine the actual basis of wages. Wages, in reality, are the price of a commodity, namely, labour-power. As such they are determined by the cost of production of that commodity, that is to say, they are based on the cost of living of the working class. The prices of other commodities are ultimately determined in a similar manner. *The cost of production in terms of the labour-time spent in production* (not, mark

simply the money advanced by the capitalist), *forms the value of a commodity which is expressed in its price.*

Prices, however, are not maintained at value-level, automatically, but are arrived at as a result of competition between buyers and sellers. According to the variations, in the state of the market, prices fluctuate above and below the value-level. Wages are no exception. Only the constant vigilance of the sellers of labour-power, the workers, can prevent wages being pushed below subsistence level. Herein lies the economic justification of the strike, i.e., the refusal to sell labour-power except on certain terms. Wages, then, are not determined apart from the struggle between the classes; they are an essential feature of the system in which that struggle is involved. Profits are the difference between wages and the total wealth produced.

Another important point arising from the example quoted is the following: whereas wages lagged behind other prices in rising, after the war they were first to fall! Here, again, we are not dealing with mere spitefulness on the part of the master class, but with a notable feature of the system by which they profit, i.e., the steady improvement in their strategic position on the economic field. During the war the introduction of more up-to-date machinery and new methods of industrial organisation had been stimulated by the factors above mentioned. Consequently, when demobilisation replenished the labour market, thousands found their occupations gone for ever. The normal process of capitalist development, expressing itself in an increase in the industrial reserve army (the unemployed), greater concentration of accumulated capital and relative lessening of the workers' powers of resistance, had been accelerated.

So far, then, is experience from bearing out the utopian conceptions of the Tory and the Labourite, that the class struggle in its primary form, i.e., the struggle over wages, is indeed more desperate than ever. For the workers the position grows progressively worse, yet some people consider this an argument for abandoning the struggle. The Socialist realises more than anyone the hopelessness of the struggle so long as the workers confine their efforts to dealing with effects on the economic field, but this only leads him to emphasise the necessity of pushing the struggle into the political arena

with a view to removing the cause. This, we proclaim, is the private ownership of the means of life. So long as the capitalist class own and control the sources of raw material and the means by which that raw material is worked up into useful articles and distributed among the population, just so long will the workers be compelled to struggle for wages, representing a steadily-falling standard of life. So long as the present system exists, so long will the few idlers monopolise the comfort and leisure which modern industry can make available for all. Are you content, fellow-workers, to be for ever slaves, to go through life branded by your wages with the status of commodities? If not, then study Socialism!

E. B.

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## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS.

### THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

(Continued from last month.)

#### IDEAS AND GOVERNMENT.

The modern "democratic" state is the only form that has been found adequate to ensure the stability of capitalist society. It alone is capable of giving expression to the interests of the propertied class, interests presenting more intricate political problems than those of any ruling class of the past. Let us consider one of these problems.

The activities of all governments, no matter of what form, are largely determined and limited by the prevailing ideas, amongst the dominant class primarily, but to a greater or less degree amongst the general subjected population also. Even by a so-called "autocracy" the deep-rooted customs and prejudices of its subjects must be respected in the main, if it is to maintain its authority.

In pre-capitalist societies, however, which possess a large heritage of patriarchalism, the mode of life changes very slowly. Generation after generation live after the manner of their fathers and, as a result, the general outlook alters so little except under abnormal circumstances, that for practical political purposes, it may be regarded as fixed and changeless, and is so regarded by the governing authority. Now a constant factor in a problem can be allowed for, taken for granted, and then ignored or made use of as different situations suggest, and this is what actually happens in "despotic" states.

But capitalist society presents a very different problem. Its technical basis is ceaselessly changing, incessantly generating new situations and problems. The immediate requirements and interests of the various groups within the propertied class are constantly and often rapidly assuming new forms. The fluctuations of the world-market affect whole sections of the bourgeoisie, and only less directly every individual in the community. With changing production a whole industry may be undermined and swept rapidly out of existence, whilst another as rapidly arises to pre-eminence. "Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all

social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones."—(Communist Manifesto.)

It is evident that, under such conditions, socio-political opinions cannot be expected to manifest either the uniformity or the stability found in less inconstant orders of society, and in point of fact, one of the characteristic features of politics under capitalism is the endless rise and fall of creeds and panaceas designed to advance sectional interests amongst the owning class or meet the problems constantly arising and pressing for solution.

The only stable and efficient mode of government for capitalism is that which allows expression to the varied and changeful sectional interests, and is sensitive to the fluctuating balance of opinions arising from the vicissitudes of the economic situation. Everywhere capitalist society solved its political problem in the same way by establishing the sovereignty of a representative assembly in which the property owners make laws and control the armed forces directly through their chosen deputies instead of indirectly and inefficiently through the inflexible, arbitrary instrument of a monarchy. Further factors will be considered later.

From the same root springs the "party system." The representation of diverse interests necessarily gives rise to political factions and through these, using the representative machinery, rival interests can compete for power—up to a certain point—without resorting to the disruption of armed conflict. Internicine warfare—by no means such a regrettable thing to the feudal baronage—is ruinous to modern industry and to the bourgeoisie.

#### FEUDALISM AND MONARCHY.

The establishment of parliament, the representative assembly of the propertied classes as the sovereign power in the state—as the legislating and government-making authority, was only accomplished after a severe struggle with the landed aristocracy

and the crown in which the merchant bourgeoisie played the leading revolutionary rôle.

Kingship and nobility were an inheritance left over from feudal society. In their day they had been the only possible instruments of government. Monarchy was essential to feudalism. Property rights in land was the main plank in its economic system. Now land cannot be produced in unlimited quantity like factory products. But though it is limited in quantity it can be differently divided. The estates of the feudal baronage were originally acquired in war, and in the earlier feudal period they could only be retained by armed force and increased or decreased by conquest and seizure. The barons began as military leaders and continued as such, defending their territories by the swords of their armed retainers. A feudal kingdom was in reality an assemblage or alliance of such lordships in a unified territory, and its political structure was essentially a hierarchy of war leaders under a supreme chief—the king. After centuries of existence feudalism had become a rigidly traditional system, with all its institutions sanctified by its spiritual guardian the Church.

During the feudal period the institution arose that was to evolve, in some cases at least, into the parliamentary system of the future. The mediæval "parliament" was, however, not a governing body, but a means of raising revenue. In it were gathered the representatives of the "estates of the realm"—the nobility, the clergy and the burghers summoned by the king for the purpose of granting supplies or taxes. Parliament in those days was extremely unpopular with those it represented, who had to pay the piper without calling the tune. Through pressure and precedent, however, it gradually acquired certain limited powers and privileges. From its right to petition the king evolved its influence in legislation. Sovereign power, legislative and executive, still rested with the crown and its council of great nobles, and parliament only assembled at the king's summons.

Commercial progress undermined the economic basis of the feudal system, while gunpowder wiped out the military strength of the barons and concentrated the armed forces in the hands of the crown. Then arose the Great Monarchies almost or en-

tirely independent of parliament. The State became a centralised bureaucracy, largely dominated by astute politicians like Richelieu. The modern nations were consolidated, whilst the Reformation signalled the break-away from feudal ideas.

Thus in an increasingly commercial age the power of the State tended to become more arbitrary, less representative and more difficult for the propertied classes to directly control. This was of little concern to the aristocratic landowners, whose vast estates entailed in their family lines were almost changeless, provided no great economic problems, and were a guarantee of perpetual security. They retained their social privileges, and the rule of the State was primarily in their interests, though they had little direct political control. But to the increasingly wealthy and important merchant bourgeoisie with no political privileges, the absolute monarchy, though at first advantageous in comparison with the old feudalism, became more and more not only a serious obstacle to their social development, but, by its revenue-snatching, strangle-hold upon commerce, an actual economic menace.

#### NEW POLITICAL THEORIES.

When, in the 17th and 18th centuries the bourgeoisie were aspiring towards political emancipation, they naturally found themselves coming up against the tenacious idea of the divine rights of kingship and the traditional, almost sacred, veneration for the hereditary privileges of the landed nobility. A necessary step in their progress, then, was the freeing of their own minds from such paralysing conceptions, and the growth of a new and acceptable theory of social rights.

Such a theory was readily provided by the economic conditions of their existence. It was possession of property, not "blue blood" or "divine right," that was the basis of their economic importance to society and their sole claim to social influence. In the market all forms of property are interchangeable and meet on equal terms. Accordingly the merchants tended to repudiate the feudal idea that land—"real" property—is a superior kind of wealth and that landowners are a class apart with a natural right to social and political privileges. In opposition, they upheld the principle of the equal rights of all property-owners.

Moreover, the acceptance of property as itself a legitimate basis for social rights led to even more revolutionary doctrines. Property is not a personal attribute like "noble birth," and "free" bourgeois property is not attached to a family line like entailed real estate. It can be exchanged, increased or decreased, acquired or lost. The idea is inescapable that all men are potential property-owners and have to this extent potentially equal rights. From this, it is only a step to the doctrine upheld by all bourgeois philosophers from Hobbes and Rousseau to Paine and Herbert Spencer—that men are born with equal "natural rights." Such ideas could commend themselves little to a money-worshipping, narrowly, class-minded plutocracy, but they could and did affect a small minority who could rise, in their search for intellectual consistency, a degree superior to the bias of material interests or class conceit.

The bourgeoisie, like every class, had its theorists—men who took the immediate and particular needs of the class, and from them evolved general principles. Few people are interested in abstract theories for their own sake, but most people look with favour upon and readily come to embrace with sincerity, principles that they can interpret as a justification for their desires, or offer as an "ideal" motive for their actions.

Such "general principles" are of the greatest value in providing a class with weapons of argument and a basis for moral enthusiasm. That which is "material necessity" for the class becomes "moral right" and a "matter of principle" to the individual.

The theoretical basis of a class movement is, however, a growth. It acquires definition and coherence, takes on new forms and becomes of increased utility, as the actual social struggle provides new and unforeseen situations and problems for solution.

R. W. HOUSLEY.

(To be continued).

#### AN INVITATION.

Will Members and sympathisers living in or around Carshalton, Surrey, communicate with the Head Office—

17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1,  
with a view to forming a Branch in that District

#### REVOLUTION AND ITS OPPONENTS.

It has often been necessary to deal in these columns with misrepresentations that have been made on the subject of revolution, and to explain what Socialists mean when referring to the social revolution.

The matter may be discussed again, however, in view of the recent references to it in the Press and in Parliament.

By the term "revolution" is meant that complete change in the relationship between the classes in society, and the fundamental change in the institutions of society that are brought about by the rise to power of a class that has hitherto been held in subjection. And the Socialist, when he speaks of the social revolution, refers to those changes in society which will be brought about when the working class, holding political supremacy, is the dominant class in society, and takes possession of the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution.

This object and this method are, of course, in the strongest contrast to the object and policy of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party is a reformist organisation engaged in advocating the patching up of the present system of society. Although some of its leaders are termed Socialists, and at times have claimed that title, they have time and time again made it quite clear that they are nothing other than reformers, and, as such, are to be ranked with the reformers of the Liberal, Tory, and other parties.

Mr. MacDonald's concern for the maintenance of the capitalist system is by no means new. In the course of a debate with Mr. J. St. Leo Strachey on the 11th May, 1908, Mr. MacDonald said:

"Moreover you must not imagine that the Socialist simply stands for labour. That is the profound mistake so many of you make. We are the greatest friends the capitalist has got. The Socialist, properly understood, is a better friend of the capitalist than anybody else."

Mr. Philip Snowden, recently Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote an article in 1922 entitled "How Far is the British Labour Party Socialist?" (*Manchester Guardian Commercial*, Reconstruction in Europe, Section 9, October 26th, 1922). In the course of this article Mr. Snowden says:

"The British Labour Party is certainly not Socialist in the sense in which Socialism is under-

stood upon the Continent. It is not based upon the recognition of the class struggle; . . ."

Further on he observes that the Labour Party "emphatically repudiates such absurdities as the 'dictatorship of the proletariat.'" After touching upon the Labour Party's Constitution, Mr. Snowden continues:

In view of the foregoing, it may now be said that while the British Labour Party has the Socialist aim in its constitution, while carefully avoiding describing it as Socialism, in fact, its programme is limited to the nationalisation, with democratic management, of the land, the mines, the railways, and other services, which are of the nature of monopolies.

In 1922 "its programme is limited." Decidedly. And in 1924, it may be remarked, the Labour Government's actions are still further limited. They are limited by the requirements of the capitalist class. An excellent idea of the limitations that would operate on Labour Party policy was given some years ago by one of "the greatest friends the capitalist has got"—as the Prime Minister described himself. On May 5th, 1911, Mr. MacDonald spoke as follows in the course of a debate with Mr. Hilare Belloc:

Says Mr. Belloc, we have never confiscated anything yet, and therefore we are no good. Well, we have confiscated a good many things. I will tell you what we have confiscated. We have confiscated a shilling in the £ of Belloc's income. And if he's fortunate enough to have any of his income invested in the funds, we have confiscated a little bit more.

In the same debate Mr. Belloc asked:

What step have you taken, MacDonald—you and yours—in the direction of transferring the means of production from those who own into the hands of those who do not own, individually or collectively?

Mr. MacDonald replied: "Income Tax."

The Labour Party, then, in spite of what Mr. Snowden calls "the Socialist aim in its constitution," is seen to be merely a social reform party. The utterances of its leaders, as well as the actions of the Labour Government, show that it is quite as firm in its support of the capitalist system as are any of the other reformist parties.

The real cause of the slavery of the working class is not touched by any of the reforms advocated by any of these parties. The cause of that slavery, with its poverty and insecurity, is the private ownership of the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution. It is true that the capitalist mode of production, with its pro-

perty basis, was necessary for the development of the instruments of production to their present stage of efficiency. But the development of the machinery of production has long since reached the stage necessary for the production of the means of life in abundance for the whole of society. The present system is based, however, upon production of commodities for profit. The struggle for markets wherein to sell these commodities becomes keener and keener, especially as the capitalist mode of production, with its more and more efficient machinery, extends in the one-time backward countries. Wars, commercial crises extending over long periods of years, unemployment, and the reduction in the workers' standards of living—these are some of the consequences of this struggle for markets. More commodities are produced than can be sold for a profit. Therefore restrictions are deliberately put upon production itself. This is not always done openly, but cases occur, and have occurred in recent years, where disguise is impossible. The restriction on the production of cotton and rubber are well known. In the case of crops and foodstuffs, neglect and destruction have been resorted to in order to promote an artificial scarcity.

The essential facts of the situation cannot be disputed by the reformist apologists of capitalism. Natural material exists in plenty, but must not be used. At the same time vast numbers of people capable of useful work will either be engaged on useless tasks or remain unemployed. The capitalist ownership is seen clearly to be a hindrance to production.

While capitalism lasts, therefore, the working class must remain in their present condition of slavery, always faced with the prospect of unemployment and forced to struggle continuously against reductions in their standard of living. On the one hand the worker is told by the MacDonalds that his conditions are gradually improving—that he is receiving dose after dose of "Socialism." On the other hand he is told by the Sir Allan Smiths that competition in the world market renders necessary a smaller cost of production with a lower wage for the worker. As for those workers whose masters cater for the home market, they also are frankly told that their wages are much too high in comparison with those of the more skilled workers.

Socialism, the remedy for the workers' slavery, cannot be brought about gradually, as the reformers would try to persuade their dupes. It can only be brought about by dispossessing the master class of the means of wealth production, and that cannot take place until the working class has made itself the ruling class in society. To accomplish this the proletariat must win political power, which means the control of the armed forces of the State. By this revolutionary method alone will it be possible to abolish private property in the means and instruments of wealth production and to substitute production for use for production for profit.

A. C. A.

### SELF-DENIAL: A MILLIONAIRE'S ADVICE.

With tiresome regularity the defenders of capitalism from Leverhulme to Lansbury reiterate that a dreadful catastrophe awaits "us" if the workers lose the taste and desire for work. The demoralisation resulting from the drawing of the "dole" or the workers craving for pleasure (heavens!) are themes for daily discussion in the press. Discontent is considered by our masters and Labour politicians as almost criminal, and an attempt is made to counter the weariness of monotonous toil by carefully-constructed appeals for hard work and sacrifice to save "us" from utter ruin. What stinking hypocrisy! To our masters, men and women of the working class are but their beasts of burden or their playthings. Harken how they voice their contempt for you:—

Some people, he said, asked what chance there was for the young man when all businesses required so much money . . . The answer was that what the young man required for success in business was the practice of self-denial. (Lord Leverhulme, "Daily Chronicle," 14.4.25.)

It is a commonplace to the Socialist that to such lengths are our masters and their agents put to defend their rotten system that they invariably contradict their statements in an effort to give them plausibility. A fuller report of the above specious reasoning was given in "The Grocer," 18.4.25 but with the addition of the following sentence in the space we have indicated " . . . an amount of money that even with the greatest care and saving, it might take any man far past the prime of life to acquire."

How significant this omission on the part of the "Chronicle," considering that the noble Lord shatters the beautiful dream of "self-denial" and damns his case with his own words. How unfortunate too for the soap magnate's plea that the same issue of "The Grocer" contains three pages of reports of bankruptcies in that trade. Within the present system, the slave condition of the workers is one of finality; only in the most exceptional cases do they ever rise to become masters. Even the rare cases of the self-made man, so-called, are relics of an age of small businesses and small capitals, now almost departed. Leverhulme's soap trust is itself an example of the wiping out of the small concern. Liptons, Lyons, the multiple stores, etc., are other examples that support our case. No need for harder work while your efforts only multiply the pleasures of the Capitalist loafers; no need for self-denial when for countless generations you have practised it with a brutal and callous indifference to your own welfare. Hurl back the lying insults at those who rob you of all life's enjoyments. Hurl them back in the only way that will matter by your organised action for the ushering in of a system wherein the Capitalist absurdities of self-denial, over work, and parasitism, can have no place.

MAC.

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1925

**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOUSING QUESTION.**

The present Government, like the preceding "Labour" Government, has been making a pretence that they have at heart the welfare of the workers, especially with regard to the housing conditions. How eloquent both Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the present Health Minister, and Mr. Wheatley, his predecessor in that office, can become over the deplorable housing conditions of the workers! And what grand schemes both can produce to solve the trouble! And yet the housing problem is as troublesome as ever. Why?

Before answering the question, let us see what the opponents of Socialism—the Conservatives and the "Labour" Party—have to say on the matter. In that Conservative paper, "The Sunday Chronicle," March 1st, Mr. Harold Begbie has an article entitled "The Selfish Builder"; from it we cull the following:—

Of all the sections of Labour which have thus paralysed our industrial activity and brought incalculable sufferings and sorrows on the head of the working classes, none stands so clearly and so cruelly guilty as that section of Labour which controls the building trade. If the nerves of the mothers of the nation are breaking down,

if their children are feeble, dispirited, and mentally dull; if there is more bitterness and cruel misery in our cities than ever existed heretofore; and, if, among other tragic sins, the deadly crime of incest is hideously increasing, then the guilt for these things lies at the door of those cadging politicians of Labour who have encouraged the operatives of the building trade to make a selfish use of the nation's direst necessity.

Mr. Begbie, in his article, is evidently not concerned about proving that the building trade operatives are responsible for the lack of houses, he is told to "sling mud" at the working class and is paid for it. Now it is the building workers; sooner or later it will be another section. In any case Mr. Begbie is expressing the view of the employers. What the Master Builders' Association plainly want is to speed up the builders' operatives to the highest possible pitch, to bring in a system of dilution to the industry and flood the labour market with cheap labour power. In other words, the employers want a larger or speedier output at a relatively reduced wages bill, so as to leave them a larger margin of profits. Wherever the workers have not been strong enough to resist this, or where they have been gulled by "Labour" politicians, and trade union leaders, on patriotic grounds, like the engineers during the war, to accept such a system of dilution and speeding up, then has it spelt disaster, in every instance, for the workers.

The "Labour" Party hold the view that the shortage of houses is due to the failure of private enterprise, and that national and municipal enterprise should take its place, failing this the State should subsidise private enterprise by money grants.

The national and municipal housing schemes of the Labour Party have not succeeded, for the same reason that other schemes fail. Capitalism, whether private, municipal or under State ownership, has no mere ethical or "spiritual" basis, its basis is material profit, obtained by the exploitation of the workers and realised by the sale of goods. If there is no sale there is no realisation of profit, and it is solely because the great majority of the workers can neither buy or even rent a newly-built house that the output of houses is restricted. This happens in all spheres of production. Neither the Conservative Party nor the "Labour" Party will reveal the real cause of the lack of new houses for the workers.

They will lie and bluff, and say how greatly they sympathise with the workers, and both will blame the shortage of the skilled tradesmen—bricklayers and plasterers—as the real trouble. In fact, no employers' henchmen have worked harder for the dilution of labour in the building industry than the so-called Labour politician—the bogey of Mr. Begbie.

Now if one were to go to the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives instead of to the capitalist and "Labour" press one would find, as their secretary has repeatedly pointed out, that bricklayers and plasterers are on the books as unemployed, despite the cant of the employers about the shortage of skilled labour.

Moreover, is there any cry about the shortage of labour when a warehouse, mill, factory, bank, theatre or cinema is wanted? No! These jump up like mushrooms overnight.

On this matter A. Sayle, formerly Housing Sub-Inspector in the Ministry of Health, says:—

In one town in which delay was said to be due to lack of skilled labour, much of which was then concentrated on building a new cinema, it transpired that the owner of the cinema was the chairman of the Council responsible for restricting just such "luxury building." ("The Houses of the Workers," pages 117-118.)

So much, then, for the bogey of shortage of skilled labour.

The master builders will not concentrate on the building of houses for workers because there is no effective demand for them. That and that alone is the reason, and this again is due to the impoverished condition of the working class who are compelled to submit, in capitalist society, to a lowering status of existence. Workers may require food, boots, clothing, etc., but if they have not the means to buy these commodities, sooner or later production of these commodities will be restricted. In like manner, if the workers require better houses, that in itself is not enough, in capitalist society, to produce them. The question is: Have they the means to pay a higher weekly rental, let alone buy them? We shall let Mr. Sayle answer:—

These facts (unemployment) and others which emerge from them have a direct bearing on the question of rents. If rents of 10s. and 12s. 6d. per week, plus rates, were within the means of men earning £5 per week (and the number of these was never as large as it was represented to be—the majority even of skilled fitters,

miners, boot operatives, and jewellers earned wages nearer £4 than £5 per week) [1919] they were clearly beyond the means of men earning £3 or £2 with the cost of living under other heads still 100 per cent. above pre-war level. The position taken up by the Ministry in the early months of 1920—that high rents were justified by high wages—had to be formally abandoned after the result of the appeal of the Leeds Corporation against the Ministry's insistence upon such rents. (A. Sayle: "The Houses of the Workers," page 169.)

So it is plain if high rents cannot be charged, neither the municipality or the State are very keen on venturing on the production of houses for workers; and even if subsidised by the State, private contractors find it more lucrative to build palaces than houses for workers.

Generally speaking, the chance of poverty-stricken and frequently unemployed workers obtaining better housing conditions is a practically hopeless one. The capitalist class, assisted by "Labour" politicians and trade union leaders in forcing down the wages of railway workers, miners, engineers and workers of various industries to their present degraded level, have prevented the workers from getting even many necessities of life, to say nothing of comforts.

The Housing Question is insoluble under capitalism, and like all other "social problems" can only be solved by social ownership.

**KNOWLEDGE.**

The following books can be obtained from Head Office:—

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## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF CIVILISATION?

### A STUDY OF "DAEDALUS" AND "TANTALUS."

These are the names of two mythological beings who flourished in the ripe imagination of the Greeks. They are also the respective names of two stimulating little essays, the one by Prof. J. B. S. Haldane and the other by Prof. F. C. S. Schiller. It is impossible adequately to review and attempt to answer the two sets of views in a paper this size, but it may not be unprofitable to consider them a little.

Daedalus is sub-titled "Science and the Future," and though only cautiously optimistic is by far the more stimulating. The rate at which science is progressing is emphasised by the mention that H. G. Wells in 1902 ("Anticipations") thought it possible that by 1950 there would be heavier than air flying machines capable of practical use in war. Prof. Haldane undertakes to make no prophecies in his paper "rasher than the above." In that spirit then, he predicts that future developments in transport and communication are only limited by the velocity of light. Progress of this kind is limited by supplies of human and mechanical power. He considers it possible that capitalism itself may demand that the control of certain key industries be handed over completely to the workers therein, so that sporadic strikes may be eliminated. This argument is interestingly developed, and he turns to mechanical power. What will replace coal and oil? Prof. Haldane's opinion is that four hundred years hence England will be covered with rows of metallic windmills working electric motors. During windy weather the surplus power will be conserved by using it for the electrolytic decomposition of water into oxygen and hydrogen. The gases would be liquefied and stored in vacuum jacketed reservoirs. In times of calm the re-combination of these gases in explosion motors would furnish electrical energy once more. So much for power.

He next foresees that immense possibilities await the chemist. At present we rely upon plants for our food, even when we take it at second or third hand from animals or their products. Prof. Haldane considers that less than 120 years will see a completely satisfactory diet, produced by chemistry alone. Agriculture will thus

cease as an industry. "Synthetic food will substitute the flower garden and the factory for the dunghill and the slaughterhouse, and make the city at last self-sufficient."

Prof. Haldane gives the eugenist but short shrift. The eugenic official he describes as a compound of the policeman, the priest and the procurer, and his prophecy as proceeding from a type of mind as lacking in originality as in knowledge of human nature. His own prophecy certainly lacks nothing of originality and consists in what he describes as "ectogenesis." The first ectogenetic child is to be born in 1951, and apart from the stage of an ovum will dispense with the necessity of a mother. The period of gestation will be spent in a serum or medium, but the more intimate details are left, perhaps wisely and necessarily, to the future. In 1968 France is producing 60,000 children a year by this method, and 150 years hence less than 30 per cent. of children are to be born of woman. Mother Nature must look to her laurels.

One must read in the book how the sands of the desert, instead of growing cold as the ballad singer has assumed, are to be made fruitful, and the deep blue sea to become a permanent beautiful purple. It is not as nonsensical as it may appear. We think it probable Prof. Haldane would not disclaim the label of Socialist, but fear he would not feel at home in the S.P.G.B. The reason will appear presently. It is refreshing to note that he includes Marx with the great figures in world history. He warns the conservative that he has little to fear from the man whose passions play second fiddle to his reason. He is to beware of him in whom reason has become the greatest of his passions. These, the doubters, are the wreckers of effete civilisation. It may take another world-war or two to convert the majority, but the next world-war has at least one satisfactory element. In the last one the most rabid patriots were well behind the front line. In the next, no one will be behind the front line.

He sums up by saying, science is as yet in its infancy, and we can foretell little of the future save that the thing that has not been is the thing that shall be; that no beliefs, no values, no institutions are safe. He reiterates that not one of the practical advances he has predicted is not already foreshadowed by recent scientific work.

Briefly the outlook appears gloomy and threatening in the immediate future whilst the dull majority is learning its lesson, but the first gleams of a scientific dawn are discernible about 25 years hence.

Prof. Schiller pooh-poohs the gloom. Mankind has always known enough to wreck itself, but chance or providence has enabled it to avoid destruction. What is needed is just a little clear thinking and plain speaking. His first fact is that mankind ceased to evolve biologically about 30,000 years ago. This raises two further questions; how did it happen and what caused it? And secondly why has he progressed in other respects; knowledge, power and culture. His answer to the first is that man ceased to develop biologically when he developed social habits. Singly nature weeded out all but the giants. Socially the herd protected its weaklings. His answer to the second is that social institutions like language and writing, have dictated social progress by preserving experience and knowledge independent of the death of the individual. Prof. Schiller develops his thesis very cogently, and opines that modern man (with a slight reservation) is slightly inferior to his own ancestors and markedly inferior to the great races of antiquity (like the Greeks) in their hey-day. Morally, we learn, modern man is substantially identical with his palæolithic ancestors. This is not the end of our tale of woe. In one particular he is in agreement with Prof. Haldane. The latter says that ectogenesis will save civilisation from collapsing from the greater fertility of its less desirable members (page 66). Prof. Schiller occupies about nine pages in developing the same line of thought, i.e., that the "best" elements in civilisation are sterilising themselves through restricting their families whilst the continued growth of population is mainly due to the unrestrained breeding of casual labourers and the feeble-minded. Dean Inge has said something similar, but then he is only a follower of the Casual Labourer of Nazareth. (Capital letters make a difference, don't they?). All men, professors, or otherwise, have their blind spot, and it is curious though understandable that these two should be so similarly afflicted. It is still more curious and less understandable that men whose obvious pride is clear-cut English and lucid thought

should commit themselves to such tawdry, fustian expressions as "desirable," or "best" as scientific descriptions of definite categories. Desirable for what? Best for what? What a begging of questions! What rubbish! Pardon this unprofessor-like language, but we have a shrewd suspicion that we are classed with the undesirables. The Freudians would say we suffer from an "inferiority complex." We are not of the "best." The felicity of attending Oxford or Cambridge has been denied us. We have been too busy working for the men whose sons the learned professors are teaching. It is only too obvious that their "desirables" and "bests" are those who have achieved wealth and position in our modern capitalist civilisation; those who have attained "success," those who have specialised in the exploitation of their fellows. Whom is it otherwise? Who are the "best"? Who are the "desirables"? And who are the "worst" and the "undesirables"? Professor Schiller permits himself the "shrewd suspicion" that certain types, say the feeble-minded, the sickly, the insane, are undesirable, and that . . . certain other types, say the intelligent, healthy and energetic, are inherently superior to the former. This occurs so late in the book as to look like an afterthought. He has therefore no time to inquire whether the causes of the first three conditions are discoverable or remediable. When he says, "no good can come of coddling and cultivating them," we can almost visualise him idly planning a lethal chamber on the margin of his manuscript. Prof. Schiller is a eugenist and eugenics implies the sterilisation or extinction of those below a certain standard. And who is to set the standard, and who enforce it? Would it be universally enforced? We mean, would the Duke of Northumberland, or Westminster, or Lord Banbury, be subject to the same impartial treatment as the village idiot? We venture to doubt it.

We welcome the excursions of thinkers such as Professors Haldane and Schiller into the world of real men, but they often seem to have one objectionable quality. Their cloistered seclusion among the sons of the rich seems to have imparted an air of aloofness to their views. They appear to overlook the fact that the little world in

which they live, move and have their being is not the real world at all. Their pupils and their friends are by no means the "best" or the "desirable." Numerically a handful, they are in the strictly scientific sense parasitic. If they were to vanish from the planet, production would go on unperturbed. Those destined for industrial pursuits as they might term them are solely concerned with acquiring skill in the intensive exploitation of labour. The ladders by which they or their fathers climbed to eminence are carefully withdrawn, lest a better man follow and push them down. The real world consists of the toiling millions who compose the vast bulk of human society. Without them there would be no society in a civilised sense at all. They are human society. They may be inarticulate, slow of thought and unimaginative, but we are of them. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. We can see undesirables being created every day. We can see our best being starved, stunted, exploited, and robbed always. We can see our geniuses denied opportunity or swindled out of their reward constantly. And we can discern the causes of it all. Society, a social product, is being run for the benefit of a select few. They safeguard their hold on the powers of production by also controlling the armed forces. Society, however, is greater than they, and their perpetual problem is how to get rid of the enormous wealth produced by modern machinery without stopping the machine. The body politic is increasingly liable to the illness called slump, and the slump is increasingly due to over-production. And now, more and more are coming to see that there is something wrong with a society that condemns the bulk of its members to poverty, a poverty which is intensified with every increase in the production of wealth.

Of course there is something wrong. The wealth producing machinery of society is owned and controlled by a few. Their sole concern is not the benefit of society as such but their own individual benefit. The productive forces have outgrown this petty, personal restriction, and the Socialist says the time has come when they should be owned by society as a corporate organism. Humanly speaking we cannot expect the capitalists to view this prospect with any enthusiasm or to co-operate in its achieve-

ment. Fortunately they are numerically negligible and solely depend upon the workers consistently and persistently handing them the keys of power every election day. Their trust has been justified so far, but we propose a change. We propose that at a future election the workers send to Parliament delegates pledged and instructed to take control of the armed forces of the nation, and to then legislatively convert the whole productive machinery of society from private to social ownership. This requires organisation. The beginnings of that organisation exist in the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Join it. W. T. H.

## IS MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE SOUND?

### A DEBATE AT LEYTON.

About five hundred people were present at the Leyton Town Hall, on Sunday, March 8th, to hear the debate between the London Constitutional Labour Movement and the S.P.G.B. The subject for debate was, "Is Marx's Theory of Value Unsound?" Councillor A. Smith occupied the chair.

Mr. Kirkley (of the L.C.L.M.) opened the debate to show that "Marx's Theory is unsound." He stated that the subject for debate was of the greatest importance, and indeed, so exceedingly deep that he doubted whether all in the audience would fully comprehend the arguments advanced by both sides. It was necessary for them to understand Marx, for in his opinion, much of the industrial unrest of to-day could be traced to the influence of Marx's writings.

Much that had been written against Marx's Theories could be correctly described as rubbish. Undoubtedly Marx was an able man; in fact he was a genius. Therefore his views could not be easily dismissed. Mr. Kirkley then dwelt at length with facts concerning the birthplace of Karl Marx. Marx had studied Law, Philosophy and History and had gained a degree on Philosophy at the University of Jena with a thesis on Epicurian and Democritian Philosophy.

The first nine chapters of Marx's work, "Das Capital," contain the essence of his theory of value. Therein Marx had defined wealth as an immense accumulation of commodities. Each of these commodities, said Marx, had value, that value being

determined in a certain way. It was here that he parted company with Marx. Take the case of a chair. It required labour to make that chair, but we must remember that it was only produced because there was a demand for the chair. The chair has a value because it is a useful article. It was Marx's contention that the value of the chair is determined by the amount of labour embodied in it. He, Mr. Kirkley, had now reached the main point of the discussion, but since the time of his first speech had now expired, he would reserve his main criticism until his next speech.

Comrade Reynolds, on behalf of the S.P.G.B., stated that he agreed with his opponent that much rubbish had been written against Marx. If any person in the hall had not previously heard what Marx's theory of value was, the remarks of Mr. Kirkley, who had set out to oppose that theory, would not have enlightened them one iota upon the subject. More than one half of Mr. Kirkley's time had been spent on points concerning the birth certificate of Karl Marx. We were not here to discuss that, but to debate Marx's theory of value. Mr. Kirkley had failed not only to disprove that theory, but to state that theory correctly. In view of this, he, Comrade Reynolds, would state it, but before doing so would make a few remarks concerning the meaning of certain terms to be used in the debate. The term value, as used in Political Economy, must not be confused with the same term which we all use to express our likes and dislikes in various ways. In economic science, as in other sciences, certain terms are used to express specific meanings. The political economist John Stuart Mill says:—

The word value, when used without adjunct, always means, in political economy, value in exchange."

In that sense we were concerned with the word value in this debate. Again, there is the word wealth, which is commonly understood to signify only money. For the purposes of political economy, the term wealth embraces all those things which are the result of human energy having been applied to nature given material. Hats, boots, clothes, ships, houses, gold and silver, etc., come within the real meaning of wealth. At present we are concerned with the theory which explains exchange relationship be-

tween commodities. Commodities are useful articles which are produced, not for their use to their producers, but for the purpose of exchange.

Thinkers in the past have endeavoured to discover the basis of the exchange relationship of these commodities. Aristotle, one of the greatest thinkers of ancient Greece, had applied his mind to the subject, and saw that exchange implied equality. As to what the basis of the equality in exchange was, Aristotle never saw. Between the seventeenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, a number of political economists formulated theories of value which regarded labour as the basis of value in exchange. The chief of these economists as far as England is concerned, were Sir W. Petty, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. After quoting and indicating the shortcomings of these economists Comrade Reynolds said the labour theory of value was for the first time scientifically worked out by Karl Marx. Marx laid it down that the value of commodities is determined by the amount of labour socially necessary for their production and reproduction; the amount of that socially necessary labour being measured by time. Thus according to Marx's theory, value is socially not individually determined. This point is of vital importance. Mr. Kirkley had stated that the labour embodied in the chair determined its value. Mr. Kirkley was wrong. If therefore Mr. Kirkley intended to build up a case against Marx on that unsound foundation his case must inevitably collapse. After elaborating upon Marx's theory, Comrade Reynolds said probably there were some in the audience who wonder how, if exchange is conducted on the basis of equality, profit is obtained. The explanation is quite a simple one. Of all the commodities exchanged in the market there is one peculiar commodity known as labour power. That commodity is represented by the mental and physical capabilities of the men and women of the working class. Since the workers under capitalism have no means of obtaining a living other than by way of selling their power to labour, that labour power becomes a commodity. Like other commodities, it is, broadly speaking, paid for or exchanged at its value. But between the value of labour power and the value of its product there is a difference. The capi-

talist does not employ workers from a motive of philanthropy. Capitalism could not exist in that way. The workers produce the wealth, only a portion of that wealth is returned to them, the remainder being retained or appropriated by the capitalist. The difference between what the workers produce and what they get in wages is generally known as profit, but called by Marx surplus value. That profit or surplus value, though not realised until the exchange of commodities takes place, is actually derived from the process of production, and represents the unpaid labour of the workers. The Marxian theory of value, not only shows us what value is, and how it is determined, but also shows us the source from which flow the riches and poverty in modern society. He, Reynolds, would now ask his opponent to attempt a refutation of Marx's theory.

Mr. Kirkley in his next speech of twenty minutes congratulated Reynolds upon his knowledge of Marx. It was absurd to say that there was such a thing as surplus value. In the production of wealth there were five requisites, viz: Land, Capital, Labour, Enterprise and Ability. The Socialists recognise only one, namely labour, as sole source of wealth. The man who uses his ability is entitled to some reward. Surplus value could not arise since no matter who gets it, whether the Duke of Devonshire or the Duke of Northumberland, it all comes back to the workers. The capitalist, i.e., the man of ability, either invested part of his profit in business or spent it in some way which caused employment for the workers. He regretted as much as any man the existence of poverty. He would like to see a more equitable distribution of wealth. The men of organising ability would always be required. Under no form of society, even Socialism, could the worker receive the full value of his product.

The Chairman then called upon Comrade Reynolds to speak for twenty minutes. With scathing humour and satire Reynolds exposed the shallowness of his opponent's position. Mr. Kirkley had not said one word to disprove Marx's theory. Instead he had given utterance to a number of amazing contradictions. If surplus value did not exist how did it come back to the workers. But how surplus value came back to the workers Mr. Kirkley had not told

us. Perhaps it comes back to the workers by way of a certain gentleman now spending his time in a cruise in the Mediterranean to recover from a slight attack of influenza. Perhaps it comes back by way of the tour about to be made by the Prince of Wales to South Africa and the Argentine. If surplus value comes back to the workers, why does Mr. Kirkley require a more equitable distribution of wealth? To show the absurdity of Mr. Kirkley's statement he, Reynolds, would quote not from Marx, not from any Socialist, but from a well-known capitalist, Lord Leverhulme, who said:—

When we remember that nine-tenths of the wealth of the United Kingdom, and of probably of many other countries, belongs to one-tenth of the people, and that one-tenth of the wealth only is the portion of nine-tenths of the people, we get an idea of the scope there is for adjustment of conditions and opportunities. ("The British Dominions Year Book.")

Contrary to his opponent, who said there were five requisites for wealth production, he, Reynolds, recognised only two, namely nature given material and human energy. Ability is essential to wealth production, but who applies the ability? No other than those who belong to the working class. People who spend their time around the gaming tables of Monte Carlo, and in making pleasure trips to various parts of the world, may possess ability, but do not use that ability in the process of wealth production. No Socialist claims that under Socialism the workers will receive the full value of their product, since a certain amount must be set aside for reproductive purposes. But all that is set aside for this purpose under Socialism will be used for the benefit of the whole of society, and not as it is to-day, for the benefit of a few parasites.

The remainder of the debate was taken up by the Anti-Socialist repeating his former statements regarding surplus value, and asserting that increased production was the only remedy for working class troubles. All his points were effectively dealt with by Comrade Reynolds.

The debate was well appreciated by the audience, who showed unmistakable signs that the Socialist case was a sound one.

Undoubtedly good propaganda work was done by this debate, besides a good deal of literature being sold.

A. S. C.

## SOCIALISM AND INSURANCE.

*Reply to a Correspondent.*

Miss Hilda Brock (Leyton) writes asking us to explain a passage which occurred in a recent article on "Socialism and the Middle Class." The passage is: "What need of insurance clerks in a world where risks are borne by society instead of by a special section with a view to making a profit."

Miss Brock is of the opinion that under Socialism insurance and bank clerks will simply be transferred to the service of the State, which will take over these institutions, and that there will consequently be no labour set free for productive work.

It is evident first of all that Miss Brock falls into the common error of supposing that Socialism is merely an extension of State ownership. In fact, State Capitalism and Socialism are irreconcilable, and the Socialist Party accordingly opposes parties which advocate the former, such as the Labour Party.

Capitalism is continually producing insecurity for individuals, both capitalists and workers. Insurance companies make profit for their shareholders by insuring these individuals against some of the effects of that insecurity. Where profit cannot be made, the State (that is, the capitalists as a whole) is compelled to step in, and must in the last resort, maintain destitute workers to prevent mass starvation.

When private ownership, which is the cause of the workers' poverty, is abolished, there will be no need to protect them against insecurity which will no longer exist. There will be no room for any kind of profit-making, and therefore no private banks, insurance companies or other capitalist concerns.

Society will organise the production of goods and their distribution to those places where the members of society want to consume them. Clerks will be needed to keep records and make estimates of wealth production, but they will not be needed to waste their labour, making private profit for insurance shareholders out of the misfortunes of individuals arising from the disorganisation of the social system.

Ed. Com.

## THE BEAUTIES OF "PROGRESS."

I am not saying that everything is perfect, but when we are taking stock, when we are looking ahead, let us not forget at the same time to be conscious of the progress that has been made up to now.—(Mr. Stanley Baldwin, *Yorkshire Post*, March 13, 1925.)

If, of course, millions have failed to experience the progress, then they must be consoled with the fact that Mr. Baldwin did not state that "everything is perfect" (*sic*). Even a body like the Free Church admits in conference that the past 20 years has left untouched the most "serious and perilous evils," and that "no social arrangement seems able to remove them" (*"Daily News," 13/3/25*). Their remedy consisted of a few pious reflections and a resolution to request the Government to sanction instruction in schools on the evils of gambling. They furthermore will continue to support the system which produces the "serious evils." Another gentleman who has sworn to save humanity, has re-discovered that everything is not perfect. In a white heat he declares:—

It is intolerable in a land of considerable wealth there should be millions in slums. It is intolerable in a country of such resources there should be millions on the brink of starvation, millions living beneath the poverty line and millions on the margin.—(Lloyd George, *Daily Chronicle*, February 16, 1925.)

Having relieved himself, like the rest of the supporters of capitalism he will proceed to do everything in his power to maintain the system that breeds and fosters the above. Has he not told the wicked Tories that he represents a party "which is just as firmly rooted as you in the existing order" (*"Daily News," 26/10/24*)? That is in the "order" that he tells us is "intolerable." Of course it is fairly tolerable for those with the "considerable wealth," but who are not in the slums with the abdomens on the margin of emptiness. Fellow-workers, while you remain indifferent to your class interests you, too, unconsciously support that order. Doing so, you will continue to have increasing doses of the above kind of progress.

MAC.

### NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A.L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 12, High Cross road, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS**  
**LONDON DISTRICT.**

**Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY**  
**OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

THE  
**Socialist Standard**  
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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

**TAXATION AND THE WORKERS.**  
**THE BUDGET AND THE BOTTOM DOG.**

The introduction of the Budget has once more provided the Labour Party with an opportunity of demonstrating their utility to the master-class and their utter uselessness to the workers; and right nobly have they risen to the occasion. While hundreds of delicate, half-starved women are being told by unemployment committees that they are not genuinely seeking work these redoubtable champions of the under-dog can find nothing better to do than to kick up a shindy over a tax on silk stockings!

Not only do they find themselves in the company of Liberals such as Runciman and Co. and Tories such as Colonel Gadie, of Bradford and other representatives of the employers of the West Riding, but that notorious organ of democratic enlightenment, the "Daily Mail" also rallies to their support and condemns the fiscal folly of the chameleon, Chancellor. How inspiring! What enthusiasm the spectacle must awaken in the breasts of those who seek to persuade us that the Labour Party is entitled to the support of Socialists!

Now, frankly, fellow-worker, what do these taxes matter to *you*? Have you ever known them make any practical difference to *your* condition in the long run? When, for instance, the man who won the war (you know who I mean, of course) bilked the tyrannous landlords of a halfpenny in the pound on the unimproved value of their estates, to provide money for battleships, did *you* buy a car or take a tour to the Riviera? Of course not! You went along to your job just as you always had done or you lined up at the Labour Exchange along with hundreds of thousands of others in a similar plight; and such has been your lot

whatever taxes have been put on or taken off. Nor is the reason far to seek.

Why are taxes imposed at all? That is the question you must first answer if you are to arrive at any understanding of the matter. As hinted above they are imposed for the purpose of providing for the expenditure of the State. The Labour Party themselves have on occasion shown that the greater proportion of that expenditure is upon the armed forces. Do those forces exist for *your* benefit? Is it for *your* sake that the Navy guards the products of the farms and ranches overseas, of the tribute of the gold-fields and of the cotton, cocoanut and other tropical plantations? Is it on *your* behalf that aircraft terrorise the inhabitants of India and Iraq, where the oilfields are? You only need to remember what happens when a large strike is on to find your answer. Then another branch of the services is told off to see that you do not lay unholy hands on the products of the labour of your class. You are forcibly reminded that in the land of your birth you are the bottom-dog whenever you seek to challenge the "justice" of your subsistence wages.

Of course there are not lacking fatuous boobs who profess to believe that taxation can be and is used for what they are pleased to call "social amelioration" as a primary object. The facts are all against them. Take any form of non-militant expenditure such as that on education, sanitation, the relief of destitution and the like and you will invariably find that such expenditure is manifestly totally inadequate to raise the workers above the level of mere profit-producing machines.

The "education" provided is such as will fit the child for absorption in due course into the factory, shop, or office of the boss. It is primarily an education in discipline necessary to capitalism. The instinctive curiosity of the child is smothered under a heap of "facts" systematically loaded with the cant and prejudice of religion and patriotism. That is all that education means to the workers beyond the rudimentary three r's.

The sanitation provided in working class areas is the minimum necessary to prevent the spread of infectious diseases to the areas occupied by their exploiters. It is notoriously inadequate to prevent the workers sinking to the C3 level! After a century of sanitary legislation the slum still survives, a standing menace to healthy social development.

As for the relief of destitution by such methods as insurance, these have been shown in these columns repeatedly as being nothing more than attempts to economise by centralisation—the alternative to extra police protection. Once again the sums given are nothing more than will actually prevent the masses of the destitute from raiding the food stores.

The entire machinery of government thus exists simply for the purpose of preserving the system by which the workers are robbed of the greater portion of the fruits of their labour. It is, therefore, a matter of indifference to the workers *how* taxes are raised. The essential point to bear in mind is that the sums raised are utilised in opposition to the interests of the workers.

Reformers and taxation-tinkers of all kinds endeavour to establish some connection between taxes and the workers' condition in order to claim their electoral support. Protectionists try to maintain that certain forms of taxation will increase employment. Free Traders pretend to oppose them on the ground that such taxes will increase the workers' cost of living. Neither side have ever proved their case; but even if they had the fact would contain no consolation for the worker.

Whether the workers are busy or idle they are poor and the boom is inevitably followed by the slump. So much for the Protectionist. America is eloquent testimony to the fallacy of his arguments. The Free Traders, whether they call themselves

Liberals or Labour men have nothing better to offer. Even were it true that taxes on commodities materially affected their prices for any length of time (which is a mere assumption) how does that affect the workers? Wages are based upon the cost of living of the working-class as shown in last month's issue of this paper. If there is any truth in the dogma that "the consumer pays" then a rise in the cost of living is "passed on" to the consumer of labour-power, i.e., the capitalist employer! In actual practice, however, quite irrespective of the incidence of taxation, the workers are engaged in a continual struggle to prevent wages sinking beneath the level of subsistence.

Protectionists and Free Traders alike simply represent the interests of different sections of the exploiting class. The Cobdens and the Brights no less than the Chamberlains were concerned with screwing the maximum amount of profit out of their slaves and simply used the cry of "Taxes" as a means to dupe them on the political field. The triumph of Free Trade was the signal for an all-round reduction in wages.

The Labour Party claims to have inherited the mantle of these Liberal hypocrites. So far as the Socialist is concerned they are very welcome to it. Socialism remains the only means by which the workers can achieve their emancipation from poverty and subjection. The Socialist therefore does not advocate this or that method of financing the State, but only the capture of the machinery of government by the consciously organised working class for the purpose of establishing Socialism and ridding us of the instrument of oppression for ever.

E. B.

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## **ECONOMICS AND IDEAS.**

### **THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.**

*(Continued from last month).*

#### **DIVINE RIGHT OR SOCIAL CONTRACT.**

The struggle of the bourgeoisie for political emancipation culminated in England in the Great Rebellion of 1642-48. The chief immediate cause of the outbreak was the dispute over the right of the crown to levy charges upon property owners either by taxes or forced loans without the consent of their representatives. Its general social causes however must be sought in the developing antagonism between the domination of hereditary privilege and kingly prerogative and the political needs of an increasingly commercial society.

As the crisis approached Parliament definitely demanded the right to appoint and dismiss Ministers, and the control of the army. In the six years' Civil War which followed, the established régime—the "King's cause" was defended by the nobility and the more old-fashioned of the landed gentry, whilst to the Parliamentary forces adhered the traders of the cities allied with the freehold farmers.

At this stage no purely political doctrine had an appeal wide enough to rally all revolting sections, and we find the morale of the Cromwellian Army—the backbone of the Parliamentary forces, provided by "puritanism," which in belief was the antithesis to the Catholicism of the crown and in its attitude to life the mirror of the needs of the yeomen farmers and the small traders.

It was not until the first phase of the struggle had ended in a bourgeois victory, and the question of "divine right" answered emphatically in the negative by the execution of Charles, that its theoretical expression was forthcoming. As Stopford Brooke says, "the opposition to the theory of the Divine Right of Kings did not enter into literature till after it had been worked out practically in the Civil War. During the Commonwealth and after the Restoration it took the form of a discussion on the abstract question of the Science of Government, and was mingled with an enquiry into the origin of society and the ground of social life." ("English Literature" p. 132.)

The result of this enquiry showed clearly

the wide influence commercial relations of life now had in the sphere of political thought. The productive organisations and customs of feudalism had their origin in the remote and misty past. Through unnumbered generations they persisted with little change and they were looked upon with veneration and believed to have a supernatural origin.

But commerce and money had brought a new form of organisation. The firms and companies of the traders and manufacturers had a perfectly well-known origin. They were deliberately established as a result of definite agreements between men. The law of "contract," not of "status" or custom, was their basis and safeguard. What more natural then than that the theorists of the new order should suggest that human society and the State were originally formed by a common agreement for the social good and that therefore the governing authority could be repudiated if it violated the terms of the "original contract."

Such a theory was put forward by Hobbes in his "Leviathan" (1651) and later taken up by Locke and Rousseau. Though Hobbes' materialistic views met with much opposition on religious grounds the effect of the idea of the "social contract" "at the time of its first appearance was immense. Its almost universal acceptance put an end to the religious and patriarchal theories of society, on which Kingship had till now founded its claim of a Divine right to authority which no subject might question." (Green's "Short History," p. 515). In the next phase of the struggle ending in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, the argument of the "social contract" was used with effect in the Parliamentary debates on the abdication of James II. and, in the final indictment against the King, his violation of the "contract" was specifically mentioned.

The Revolution with its "Bill of Rights" vested supreme authority in the House of Commons—the representative assembly of the propertied classes. Following it came another advance in bourgeois political theory

by Locke, who cast into more acceptable form Hobbes' ideas and definitely declared the supremacy of legislative assemblies. Again fact preceded theory. Locke's "Essay on Civil Government" was the outcome "not of a pure development of scientific ideas, but of the necessity for having a theory to justify accomplished facts." It was "in truth an elaborate apology for the Revolution of 1688; not ostensibly for its righteousness or policy in the particular circumstances, but for the possibility of such a proceeding being rightful in any circumstances." (Pollock, "Science of Politics," p. 65.)

In the new régime the landowners were still predominant but the commercial and banking interests were a great and a growing social power. In the Commons the two rival groups faced each other as the Tory and Whig parties. But many of the wealthier landowners were by now interested also in commerce and finance and the antagonism between the two orders of property tended to become less. The power of the capitalists was manifested in the founding in 1694 of the Bank of England—originally a whig finance company; in the commercial laws based on the "mercantile" principle of accumulating bullion by restricting imports of manufactured goods whilst encouraging their export; and in the trade wars against France which the landed class generally discouraged.

The British Constitution now remained without serious modification for a century and a-half, the most important development being the "cabinet system" which placed the executive under the control of the Commons. As an instrument giving political liberty to the exploiters of labour whilst securing the suppression of the producing masses the Constitution was one of the most perfect pieces of machinery in political history. The ruling classes rightly revered it as a perpetual guarantee of their wealth and privileges. They lavished adulation upon it. To Blackstone, the jurist, it was—"this noble pile," whilst Burke went into ecstasies when he contemplated its "delicate equilibrium." Based upon the right to representation of only a wealthy handful of the population—with an electorate of merely some 12,000 this allegedly democratic constitution was in reality an oligarchic despotism of the few over the many.

Through it was carried out by all due forms of law one of the most callous examples that history records of the spoliation and starvation of a helpless class through the enclosure and appropriation by the large landowners of millions of acres of the "common lands" used by the peasants of England for centuries. As a result of the growing numbers of landless and propertyless and the intense poverty of the new labouring class laws of unprecedented stringency were enforced for the protection of property. Thousands of working-class "criminals" were hanged for stealing no more than five shillings or a sheep, or for firing a rick of hay.

#### THE "RIGHTS OF MAN."

The success of the mercantile interests in England in establishing their rule through Parliament gave a stimulus to the bourgeoisie in France—oppressed by economic fetters imposed by a despotism raised upon the remnants of feudalism, bearing the chief-burden of a heavy taxation and excluded entirely from political power. Along with the smouldering discontent of the bourgeoisie developed a vigorous attack by the French intellectuals upon all the institutions and traditions of the established régime. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and the authors of the great "Encyclopedia" directed their shafts of criticism and satire upon the "unreason" of social relations, the despotism of the State over men's bodies and of the Church over men's minds.

The English Constitution was eagerly discussed and applauded. In it the French bourgeoisie and their theorists saw the ideal framework of society. Buckle in his "History of Civilisation" gives a detailed account of the extraordinary influence that English literature and institutions had at this time in France. Even Rousseau's famous work the "Contrat Social," which became the text book of the revolution, was little more than a development of the ideas of Hobbes and Locke. In it Rousseau declared the irrationality and tyranny of all existing social structure and idealised the "free, independent individual"—the "natural" man. The book had an immense vogue with all the disaffected and its popularity was so feared by the authorities that it was accorded the honour of being burnt by the public hangman.

The philosophers of the "age of reason" were sincere enough in their fierce denunciations of tyranny and glorification of "liberty"—but they could not transcend the times in which they lived. When Rousseau wrote his famous words, "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains," he was not thinking of the same "chains" as those of the equally famous declaration—"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Rousseau and those who thought with him denounced the chains of obsolete conventions and beliefs and of legal and political restrictions upon the individual and his goods. They did not conceive of property as a means of enslavement—to them it seemed the guarantee of freedom, of personal independence. Their utopia was a society of independent farmers, craftsmen and traders, and it was from this ideal basis that they formulated the inalienable Rights of Man—"to liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression." It required machinery and the "great industry" to demonstrate the titanic power of slavery latent in the "free rights of property" and the "liberty of the individual," and thus to lay the basis for the slogan of Marx.

But while the philosophers were indulging themselves with universal principles the merchants, lawyers and politicians were concerning themselves with practical realities. They were not troubled with abstract intellectual problems but with urgent economic, legal and political ones. But the main problems that confronted the revolutionary bourgeoisie in France, though the same in essence as those their English comperes had faced differed in historical setting.

The "grand seigneurs" had not been "corrupted" by commerce to the extent of the English aristocracy. They were still an exclusive, arrogant caste, despising trade, holding ancient feudal rights over the peasantry such as were long extinct in England, and—a most important point, they were entirely exempt from taxation. While the English nobility had faced merely a check to their political domination, only affecting them indirectly in an economic sense, the French nobility were confronted with a threat to their economic security, to their feudal dues and fiscal privileges—with

virtual expropriation. Hence the compromise that was achieved with little difficulty in England was in France next to impossible.

When the crisis was upon them the bourgeoisie were reluctantly compelled to ally themselves with the stirring propertyless populace of the cities. It was the "common mob" who took the Bastille. But the traders, the lawyers and the politicians had a wholesome dread of the hungry masses—inflamed with revolutionary phrases and extravagant promises and freed for the moment from their customary habits of subjection. Mirabeau warned the assembly against its "seditious allies."

Whilst they had need the bourgeoisie readily used the multitude as a threatening weapon against the crown and the aristocrats, but when the strength of the old régime was broken, when "the King could no longer collect an army, the force of the crowd was no longer necessary to the Assembly. A kind of Riot Act was accordingly passed under which certain officials might at any time proclaim Martial Law; to restrain the forces of agitation a censorship was established over newspapers and public meetings and even over the sale of literature." (Packwood Adams—"The French Revolution," p. 100.)

Thus the bourgeoisie endeavoured to maintain its newly-acquired and precarious power, to stay the surging forces of revolt that it itself had done so much to unleash and to secure "order"—the bourgeois order of peaceful exploitation.

The great rallying cry that stirred all the sections opposed to the old régime was "liberty! equality! fraternity!" But these vague words meant different things to different men. In the mouth of a bourgeois they had a definite, limited meaning. "Freedom" meant—liberation from the tyrannical control which the autocratic rule of the Bourbons had exercised over the lives and property of its unprivileged subjects. "Equality" implied the abolition of hereditary privilege and the guarantee of legal and political equality for all "responsible citizens"—all who possessed property and paid taxes.

When, in June, 1789, the deputies of the "third estate" constituted themselves the National Assembly of France their general aim was nothing more than the abolition of

feudal restrictions and the erection of a representative Constitution with a limited Monarchy on the lines of that in England. And when, three years later, the Constitution of 1791 was framed, though prefaced by the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" it divided the people into "active" and "passive" citizens; the former consisted of men who owned property and contributed taxes, and who alone were to exercise the franchise and bear arms in the National Guard; the "passive" citizens were the propertyless multitude who were allowed neither representation nor legal means of resistance. But the "have-nots" proved not quite so "passive" as the "haves" were desirous they should be.

With the further developments—the war, the republic, the inability of the bourgeoisie to consolidate its power, the temporary domination of the propertyless of Paris followed by the dictatorship and "order" of Bonaparte—we need not here concern ourselves.

Twenty-three years before the Revolution in France, a bourgeois republic—untrammelled by any effete feudal structure, had been set up in America. In spite of its "Declaration" that "all men are born equal" its political system gave the franchise only to property owners, and to show how cynically inconsistent its founders could be, it established the legality of the slave-trade.

R. W. HOUSLEY.

*To be continued.*

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## OUR REVOLUTIONARY POSITION.

In a world of political opportunism, the Socialist Party of Great Britain occupies a unique position, a position that has never been gainsaid by even its most inveterate enemies—it still adheres with unrelenting persistence and firmness to the principles on which it was originally founded. Its Declaration of Principles remains, word for word, exactly the same to-day as it was when first printed. Is there in this country any other political party of which it can be said that it knew from the first the impregnability of the basis on which it stood, and that the test of time and experience has only gone to prove the sure judgment of those who, at its inception, conceived the idea of such an organization being in fact what it claimed to be in name? Is there any other political party that has not, at some time or other, thrown overboard its principles (or its alleged principles) tacking this way and that to catch the popular wind that should waft its leaders into the pleasant harbour of position and power and monetary advantage?

It is rather strange, when one considers it, how the strict adherence of the Socialist Party to its original principles irritates the majority of people. We have been and are criticised for being "narrow-minded"; have been likened to certain very dogmatic religious sects; have been continually reproached and admonished, both in sorrow and in anger, for our refusal to swerve aside from our business of Socialist propaganda into any of the numerous side tracks—such as the advocacy of woman's suffrage, land reform, nationalisation of industries, etc.—which have, within the last few decades become popular with certain self-styled "advanced" and "modern" people, who seem to think that any activity, however futile, must be an advance, and any stunt, however foolish, a means to intellectual progress.

If our critics would take the trouble to analyse the actions and motives of the late Labour Government they might possibly come to the conclusion that a strict adherence to principle is not so narrow-minded and reprehensible as they suppose. Nominally the Labour Party was in proud possession of the seat of Government. Actually what happened was that a number of men and women, some of whom call

themselves leaders of labour and some who by no stretch of imagination can claim that they in any way represent the minutest fraction of the labouring class, were allowed, by the somewhat contemptuous consent of the Liberal and Tory parties, to act for the time being as the agents of the capitalists in national and international affairs. Neither in kind nor in degree were these Government Ministers distinguished from the other political parties when in office. They are as assiduous in attending archaic court functions; as eager to present their wives and daughters to the notice of royalty; as ready to hobnob, openly and shamelessly, with all sections of the capitalist class. The Parliamentary Bills they pass are but such as might well have been the production of Liberals and Tories (as in some cases they actually have been); and their methods of repression and secret diplomacy are all well in keeping with their predecessors' traditions. As for the fulfilment of the promises made to the rank and file of the Labour Party whilst the Labour leaders were struggling for power, as might have been expected the things promised are now found to be "impracticable," are "not possible under the circumstances," are "regrettably impossible," and so it has always been with these and such-like good shepherds of sheep-like followings.

Recently a writer in "The Star" recapitulated very effectively the exploits of some of the many Labour leaders who have in the past thrown over their erstwhile followers and tools, and have kicked away the props by which they had risen to positions of eminence, in order to place their services wholeheartedly at the beck and call of the political agents of Capitalism. Henry Broadhurst, John Burns, George N. Barnes, Isaac Mitchell, David Shackleton (plenty of others might have been cited) are shown as passing in procession before the reproachful and mildly indignant eyes of their deluded and forsaken followers. The workers' past bitter experiences of the value of their leaders' promises seem at times to have left the workers in very much the same position of blind trustfulness as hitherto. However many times they may find their confidence misplaced yet once again they are somehow able to assure themselves that at long last a leader will appear who will fulfil his promises, will justify the faith placed in him

and will miraculously lead them to the promised land of plenty. They are too little informed to realise that most of their leaders' promises could not be fulfilled in any case and that their leaders would cheerfully promise the moon or the millennium to anyone who could and would assist them in their rise to place and power.

And then these trustful beings, still retaining faith in the faithless, and hoping for what they should know is hopelessly impossible, will in one breath take us to task for holding firmly to the principles of Socialism, and in the next make the statement that any Socialist elected to Parliament would do as the rest do, would forswear his principles and seek only to further his own ends. Such people have not yet realised that it is simply because of their own weakness and ignorance that the political leaders whom they trust continually fail them; that the wisdom and strength of the electorate is the only guarantee that can be given for the honesty and integrity of the men and women elected.

In the meantime the Socialist Party will continue its business of propagating Socialism and making Socialists, and expose the MacDonalds and Snowdens and Thomases, knowing that it is but a matter of time before the curtain is rung down on the wretched political farce now being played by the Labour puppets of capitalism and their Liberal and Tory masters. One day the curtain will rise on an empty stage; the workers will not always be satisfied to be the contented spectators of a caricature of life; they will, by facing reality, learn how to live, and then goodbye to the political charlatans and the "captains of industry." Goodbye also to Capitalism and the slaves of wagedom. But till then we of the Socialist Party will hold fast to the political and economic truth of life as we know it and leave the social, political and religious humbug to those who are content to sell their manhood for "a handful of silver" or "a riband to stick in their coat."

F. J. WEBB.

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**The Socialist Standard,**

JUNE



1925

**THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SOCIALISM.**

Much space has been devoted to this subject in the correspondence columns of the "Daily Herald" since the appearance of an article in which Mr. Wheatley expressed his opinion that there is no reason at all why a Catholic should not be a loyal member of the Labour Party. On this occasion Mr. Wheatley chose to pretend that the Labour Party is a Socialist Party, and that to show that the Labour Programme is compatible with the acceptance of Catholicism is the same thing as showing that Socialism is likewise compatible with it. The force of Mr. Wheatley's argument is completely destroyed by his own definite assertion elsewhere that the Labour Party is not a Socialist Party. (See April Socialist Standard and Forward, 3rd November, 1923). It is, therefore, not surprising that the Editor of the "Daily Herald" declined to insert a letter pointing out Mr. Wheatley's contradiction of his own argument. This is strictly in accordance with the "Herald's" well-known principle of throwing open its columns to all shades of opinion—which agree with the Editor's. If the opinion disagrees the columns are still open to those who can afford to pay the usual advertising rates.

The controversy was carried a stage further by the assertion of Mr. C. Diamond that a Catholic could not be a Socialist, but could be a member of the Labour Party because that body is not a Socialist Party. Mr. Diamond is the Editor of the "Catholic Herald," and has three times stood as a Labour candidate with the official endorsement of the National Labour Party. He was accepted each time.

In face of the fact that he distinctly declared that while he was a Labour man he was not a Socialist Candidate (Catholic Herald, 23rd May, 1925).

He wrote to the "Daily Herald" (8th May) and after quoting from our pamphlet, "Socialism and Religion," in support of his views, went on:—

Mr. E. Van der Velde, leader of the Belgian Socialist Party in his "Essais Socialistes," p. 148, says: "To be at the same time Catholic and Socialist, is not only a contradiction but a practical impossibility."

Cardinal Mercier declares "all the Popes who were witnesses of the dissolving action of Socialism—Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV—condemned Socialism. The present Pope, Pius XI, condemns it."

It is surely only fair to Catholics and Socialists that the truth should be known.

The Editor of the "Herald" added his comment as follows:—

Mr. Diamond, who has been three times a Labour candidate, must know that the Socialist Party of Great Britain is a small organisation which has no authority to commit the Labour Movement to any point of view. He must know also that the controversies between Catholics and Socialists (and, indeed, Liberals as well) on the Continent have no counterpart in this country.

Mr. Diamond accused Mr. Ben Spoor of having stated that the Labour Party was not Socialist. Mr. Spoor has denied that in our columns, but Mr. Diamond offers him no apology.

With regard to Mr. Spoor and the statement he was alleged to have made, Mr. Diamond informs his readers that he is still engaged in a search for the exact quotation (23rd May). But surely the request for an apology is a piece of impudence, coming as it does from the "Daily Herald" Editor in view of his refusal to publish the admission made by Mr. Wheatley or to publish a similar admission made by Mr. Snowden and sent to him after the publication of Mr. Diamond's letter. Other correspondents whose letters the "Herald" selected for insertion claimed Father O'Meara, of Corpus Christi Church, Brixton, and Father

Hagerty, as Catholic priests, who are also Socialists.

Mr. Diamond accordingly approached Fr. O'Meara, who was a Labour candidate and is still an active Labour supporter, for his views. The reply is a plain denial.

You can deny most emphatically that I am a Socialist (Catholic Herald, 23 May).

As for Father Hagerty, it seems, according to Mr. Diamond, that he has ceased to be a Catholic Priest "in good standing," and it is therefore as reasonable to quote his views as representing those of the Catholic Church as it would be to quote the secularist Mr. McCabe on the ground that he had once been a monk.

As the "Herald" made some misleading remarks about the Socialist Party, the following letter was addressed to them, but they refuse to publish it:—

May 19th, 1925.

The "Editor,"  
"Daily Herald,"  
2, Carmelite Street, E.C.

Dear Sir,

re "SOCIALISM & RELIGION."

Our attention has been called to a letter written by Mr. C. Diamond which dealt with the antagonism between Socialism and Religion, and was published in your columns on the 8th inst. Your Editorial comment contains the following passage:—"Mr. Diamond . . . must know that the Socialist Party of Great Britain is a small organisation which has no authority to commit the Labour Movement to any point of view." In view of probable misunderstanding arising from this, we ask that you insert this letter in order that your readers may know that while the Socialist Party claims to represent the Socialist view on religion as on all other matters, it has not claimed and has no desire to speak in the name of the Labour Party to which it is opposed.

As too, smallness of numbers is no proof of mistaken opinions, we would welcome the opportunity to state in the "Daily Herald" the Socialist attitude of opposition to religion because so far only one side of the case has been given publicity.

Yours faithfully,

General Secretary.

What plainly divides Socialism from all kinds of religious belief is that "Socialism is a naturalistic and materialistic philosophy.

It entirely excludes the supernatural." What causes the Catholic and Protestant Church as institutions and the Labour Party as a political body to oppose Socialism is equally plain.

Socialism stands for the abolition of private property in the means of wealth production and distribution; it involves therefore the abolition of the right to "live by owning," which is at present enjoyed by the propertied class. The Labour Party, while advocating certain reforms which meet with the approval of the Churches do not advocate Socialism. They advocate Nationalisation or State Capitalism, which permits the capitalist to continue living on his investments, the only real difference being that he lends the money to the Government instead of investing it in privately-controlled companies. It is ultimately of no importance to the Churches as property owners or to the rest of the propertied class, how they get their income so long as they do get it. It is equally immaterial to the workers whether they are exploited by private companies to provide that income or whether they are exploited directly by the State. What they must recognise is that the Labour Party and the Churches are in favour of a continuance of the exploiting system with certain minor alterations. Moreover it is not simply a question of material interest. Anyone who cares to enquire into the economic doctrines which underlie the Labour Party programme will find that those doctrines do not treat profit and interest as exploitation, and do not recognise the possibility of abolishing them. Thus Mr. MacDonald in his "Socialism and Society" and Mr. Tawney in his "Acquisitive Society" are agreed that industry cannot be carried on unless the capitalist is paid for the use of his property. Interest is for them not a feature of capitalism which can now be dispensed with along with the system to which it belongs, but a feature of modern industry inevitable unless we destroy that industry and revert to peasant and handicraft production.

Here is a fundamental cleavage between the Socialist and the Labour Party. It is also a cleavage between the Socialist and the Catholic Church.

In his Encyclical "The Condition of the Worker," Pope Leo XIII. clearly recognised this. Dr. Cohalan, Bishop of Cork,

preaching on the Encyclical (see Freeman's Journal, Oct. 12, 1916) pointed out that most people who describe themselves as Socialist do not deny rights of private property and therefore do not come under the Pope's ban: Taking over railways, tramways, water supply, etc.

By the State . . . is not Socialism. It does not imply a denial of private ownership, or of succession, or of the wage-earning system. The employees of the State are wage-earners.

Socialism on the other hand means the abolition of the wages system. It may suit the Labour Party to get votes by pretending on the one hand to be Socialist, and on the other repudiating Socialism in order to attract religious people, but for their own sake the sooner the workers recognise the real facts the better for them. We stand for Socialism with all its implications, the Labour Party from confusion of thought and dishonesty of purpose is not even willing to have the Socialist view towards religion stated in the pages of the "Daily Herald."

There are, of course, other aspects of this vital antagonism to be considered. Fraser, in the "Golden Bough," draws attention to one of them.

It might with some show of reason be maintained that no belief has done so much to retard the economic, and thereby the social progress of mankind as the belief in the immortality of the soul, for this belief has led race after race, generation after generation, to sacrifice the real wants of the living to the imaginary wants of the dead. The waste and destruction of life and property which this faith has entailed are enormous and incalculable (Psyche's Task).

Mentally and materially the obstruction of effort and waste of resources caused by the superstitions of religion and the conflict of sects is still holding back the human race. The believer in a mythical future life will never whole-heartedly devote himself to perfecting the real life here, which is all he will ever know.

Marx coined the striking phrase "Religion is the opium of the People," and Lenin in our own day was forced to see the necessity of freeing the workers' minds from the effects of this drug. He held it to be

Of paramount importance . . . That a magazine devoting itself to problems of militant materialism should at the same time be conducting an untiring campaign of propaganda for atheism. . . (see Communist International, Congress Number, 1922).

Those who want to understand the Philosophy of Socialism and the theoretical and practical relations between Socialism and Religion should read our pamphlet advertised in this issue.

### "A LIVING WAGE."

I.L.P. MOONSHINE.

Now and again our opponents forget themselves and tell the truth, but they do not point out the harm that has been done by their previous deviations from the truth.

The Independent Labour Party has kept the workers' attention fixed upon questions of Taxation, Credit Banks, Nationalisation, and a thousand and one other things in which the remedies proposed would bring no appreciable improvement in the general position of the workers.

In the course of the Editorial Article (New Leader, 17/4/25) dealing with the I.L.P. Conference, the editor writes:

"On this broad problem we propose to concentrate the mind and will of the Labour movement. Men, if they are to fight in a solid phalanx, must fix their thoughts on a simple issue. You cannot rally the masses for a banking policy or an elaborate scheme of industrial re-organisation. You can rally them to the simple demand for a living wage."

The writer goes on to state that he knows the demand is an impossible one but that the move is a strategical one "to require every industry which fails to pay wages on this basis to submit to reorganisation and control."

Let us first of all take note of the proposed change in the I.L.P. policy. It, also, has fallen a victim to the "United Front" and "Strategy" fevers. Previously, as mentioned above, the traditional policy of the I.L.P. has been the backing of all kinds of schemes as part of the "step by step progress to Socialism"; now it is waking up to the fact that a simple single issue is better than an assortment of complex issues. But what an issue has been chosen! A Living Wage! The idea is almost a century old and the I.L.P. has not got beyond it yet. What is the objection to "Socialism" as the single simple issue? Surely that would be an issue worth fighting on. Why, then, is it not proposed? The answer is simple. The I.L.P.'s idea of "Socialism" is a vast and complicated system of state ownership, in which credit

banks, money, and other trading impedimenta would flourish. The members of the I.L.P. are too hide-bound by their own "step by step" ideas to grasp what Socialism really signifies—wealth produced, distributed, and enjoyed communally, without the intervention of money, credit instruments or any of the other rubbish essential to a trading world.

The editor of the "New Leader" would have people believe that the reorganisation of industries to guarantee a living wage to the workers in such industries would be a relatively simple matter. But would it? First of all there would be committees and conferences to define a living wage; after which there would be interminable discussions as to what was a living wage in a particular industry and in a particular district, and so on. The net result of which would be the provision of fat jobs for unemployed labour leaders like Hodges and opportunities for "statesmanlike" speeches from decoy ducks like Thomas.

Surely the workers have had enough of "controlled industries" during the last ten years or so to knock all such balderdash out of their heads for ever. But then the I.L.P., the Labour Party, and similar organisations do so love committees and conferences with the masters—it is such a nice gentlemanly way of proceeding, it develops social intercourse and breaks down class barriers between masters and leaders, and, above all, there is no immediate fear of anything really serious happening to disturb the peaceful, placid step by step progress down the incline to the grave of all hopes.

However, the final and sufficient answer to all who propose such remedies is that capitalism itself nullifies whatever advantages might accrue by worsening the general condition of the workers. It is not suggested that all who live should have a living wage, but that the workers should have a living wage; in other words that those in employment should have a living wage. Let us see how the business would work out assuming that the point were conceded.

First of all we take it that, broadly speaking, a living wage means a wage on which people could live with a certain amount of comfort: pay the average rent demanded, get a sufficiency of nourishing food, have the small luxuries necessary to make life worth living, be able to give their

children the necessary education and leisure, and be able to take an annual holiday to freshen and rebuild a jaded physique.

Once such a wage was conceded the employers would immediately receive an extra impetus to look around for ways and means to lower production costs. Machinery that low wages now render unnecessary would be introduced, fresh machinery invented, waste as far as possible eliminated, industries amalgamated to cut out waste connected with competition. The result of this process (a process that is always going on but receives an extra push now and again) would be a reduction in the numbers of workers employed and an increase in the already huge quantity of unemployed. A small group of workers would be more comfortable at the expense of greater misery for the mass.

In other words attempts at bettering the conditions of the workers, while retaining the wage system, act, as a rule, as incentives to the capitalists to lower production costs by methods that worsen the general conditions of the workers. The only, and the simple, solution is the introduction of Socialism. GILMAC.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Our readers will readily appreciate the hard struggle an organisation like the S.P.G.B. has to raise the necessary funds to continue the publication of new pamphlets on Socialism. Since the object of the S.P.G.B. is the establishment of Socialism and nothing less, unlike other Political Parties—Capitalist and pseudo-labour—we are not likely to receive any assistance from benevolent or vote catching millionaires. No, we are dependent upon you—our members and sympathisers—the Working Class. Fresh literature, which will supply the Working Class with much needed Socialist education, is constantly needed, and the S.P.G.B. is trying to fill the bill though necessarily handicapped by lack of funds. However, in response to the great demand, we have just reprinted the second edition of "Socialism and Religion" and this admirable pamphlet is now on sale (see advert. in another column). The MS. of another pamphlet, one that is long overdue, is now ready. The title will be "Socialism," and it is a comprehensive brochure of 48 pages, covering every phase of the Socialist posi-

tion and is the official statement of the Party, of the case for Socialism. We are only held up for want of cash to pay for printing, and we address this appeal to all those who desire the propagation of Socialism to continue. It rests entirely with you whether or not we shall be able to publish this new pamphlet during the coming propaganda season and we urge all to put their shoulder to the wheel to make this possible. Send along your donation—no matter how small—to the Publications Fund Committee, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1.

#### PUBLICATIONS FUND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
M. Cullan .. .. .	3	0	
J. Breslin .. .. .	2	0	
J. Reeves .. .. .	5	0	
"Admirer" .. .. .	6		
Rowlands .. .. .	2	6	
T. B. .. .. .	1	0	0
R. Franklyn .. .. .	1	0	0
Mr. "X" .. .. .	1	0	0
H. Gostick .. .. .	5	0	
East London Branch .. .. .	3	3	0
S. Elliot .. .. .	1	0	
L. Black .. .. .	5	4	
Sale of Photos .. .. .	3	9	
Willis .. .. .	1	0	
Battersea Branch .. .. .	5	0	0
Childs .. .. .	2	6	
Central Branch .. .. .	1	0	0
Search .. .. .	5	0	
A. Paterson .. .. .	13	1	
Wood Green Branch .. .. .	2	0	0
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W. J. Lay .. .. .	1	6	
Islington Branch .. .. .	1	10	8
Previously acknowledged .. .. .	8	19	4
19-5-25.	Total	28	2 8

#### AN INVITATION.

Will Members and sympathisers living in or around Carshalton, Surrey, communicate with the Head Office—

17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1,  
with a view to forming a Branch in that District

#### NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

#### THE ANTI-FASCISTS.

##### A CRITICISM AND OUR REPLY.

*The National Union for Combating Fascism.*

29, Slack, Heptonstall,  
Hebden Bridge, Yks.,  
April 29th, 1925.

The Editor,  
Socialist Standard.  
Comrade :

It is only by chance that I have come across your criticism of the above organisation in your April issue. If any such criticism had been made in "The Clear Light" we should have made very sure that the party so criticised would have had a paper sent to him so that he could meet the attack.

The nature of your attack is such that you can hardly refuse me space in your paper in which to meet it, but I am not prepared even to meet it until Mr. "H" steps from behind the cover of his initial and substantiates his insinuation that behind the N.U.C.F. are people of the itching palm, eager for subscriptions and donations for purposes not associated with socialist integrity. Doubtless he will say that he made no accusation; but he made a certain impression and I challenge him to withdraw his statement.

Fraternally,  
ALFRED HOLDSWORTH,  
Editor, "The Clear Light."

#### Our Reply.

The offending passage was this: "Behind the rank and file of sincere but panicky people who join these freak parties, whether nominally 'advanced' or 'reactionary,' are usually to be found numerous job-hunters moved by an itch to lay hands on donations and subscriptions. We need not discriminate between the personalities of the N.U.C.F., for as regards possible harm to the cause of socialism there never was much to choose between the unscrupulous and the foggy-minded."

We understood at the time that a copy of the "S.S." came regularly into the hands of the Editor of the "Clear Light." For this omission we offer our apology.

Otherwise we have nothing to withdraw or to apologise for. The only statement made is that there is usually a certain feature associated with freak organisations

of this kind. We do not attach great importance to the matter, but the N.U.C.F. could quite easily make its position clear by freely opening all its books and meetings to the public as does the Socialist Party.

Mr. Holdsworth is quite at liberty to use our columns for the purpose of replying to the criticisms of his organisation, and if he does not avail himself of this offer the responsibility rests with him and not with us.

ED. COM.

#### THE ROMANCE OF AGES.

Down from the tree-tops he came, primeval man, driven by hunger to wander through the forest with his kin searching for the nuts, roots and fruits on which he lived. He was the oldest specimen of his race and wandered over Europe when the climate was tropical and palms and tropical animals abounded. He required no clothes as the hair covering his body was sufficient protection in the mild climate then prevailing. His only weapons and tools were the branches torn from trees and the rough stones picked out of the beds of water-courses. He had learnt the art of communicating his primitive ideas by means of speech liberally helped out with gestures. His family arrangements were those of the brute from which he had just branched off, no rule had yet grown to guide him higher. He wandered widely over Europe before the coming of the ice drove him towards the Equator.

Slowly, very slowly, and painfully, man acquired more knowledge. A new type arose born during the breaks in the great ice ages. He discovered the wonderful properties of fire, and was able to add fish to his diet, a new weapon with which to fight hunger. Fire severed the cord that bound him to the forests and he wandered widely over the earth in the open, following the courses of the streams that provided him with fish. Out of the beds of streams he took rough stones and fashioned them into crude implements. His habitations were the beds of streams and holes in the hills. He peopled the hills, the woods, and the streams with living beings. The tree that fell on and crushed him, the rocks that impeded his passage, the mighty torrents, became to him objects endowed with life as he was—Religion was born. He wrought on the rough stone making for himself a

stone-headed club and spear and became a hunter, strengthening himself in the fight against hunger by the addition of occasional supplies of meat to his food. The evil results of promiscuous marriage were modified by the growth of a rule prohibiting the marriage of parents to children.

Years passed away by the thousand and he learnt to make bows and arrows. Hunting became easier and meat became a more regular part of his food. On clay and stone, on the sides of his caves, using sharp-pointed wood or stone for pens, he sketched rude pictures of the animals he hunted, and the animals that hunted him. With the aid of fire he furnished himself with log boats to carry him over the water. He learnt to weave and make baskets and to make tools out of the bones of animals. He built himself huts and set them out in the form of village settlements—the town was born. He modified still further his marriage relations, and prohibited the marriage of brothers and sisters. He had by now gathered together some property and the seeds of the subsequent class struggles were planted. This property was held at first by women. He stepped higher in his religious ideas, and worshipped the elements; the earthquake, the cyclone, the cloudburst, inspired him with awe and he trembled before nature's terrors and sought to find means to propitiate the mighty powers that so often involved him in wreck and ruin. He grew in numbers and lived in larger groups. These large groups were separated into gentes, phratries and tribes, or groups of close kinship, groups of near cousins, and groups of distant cousins. He improved his language and learnt the use of syllables. He polished up his stone implements and produced wonderful specimens of polished stone tools. The huge fierce animals that had harassed him of yore began to give way to a smaller and less ferocious kind, and the limbs, stature and gait of man lost much of their strength and uncouthness, becoming more beautiful as befitted one grasping at the conquest of nature.

With the discovery of pottery man continued his upward climb and found means to store his ever-growing varieties of food. He tanned the skin of the deer and took a pride in his personal adornment. He built himself villages surrounded by stockades, tamed the dog as a companion for hunting

and learned how to make bread. His numbers had now grown so large that much of his attention was taken up with social organisation. The tribes had grown into numerous tribes living in a confederacy under a council of chiefs—the state was born. His religious ideas had moved upward to the conception of a great spirit that ruled his destiny, and the dreams that troubled his sleep became to him evidences of the wanderings of himself in other lands. His rude attempts at art grew into the making of pictures that conveyed ideas to those at a distance—the art of writing was born.

Some of the animals he hunted he learnt to domesticate and secured for himself a regular supply of milk and meat. But he did more. The work to be done in attending to flocks and herds was little. It was possible to supply the needs of many by the labour of few. Man at last was able to provide a surplus on which non-workers could live. Man learned the lesson well and in the wars on his kind he obtained captives who were put to work looking after the herds, thus giving leisure to the owners of the herds—in such wise was born the slavery that flourishes to-day.

Man cleared the forests and converted them into arable land and land on which to pasture his flocks. He cultivated gardens and raised root crops, pushing farther away his age-long enemy hunger. His wealth and responsibilities grew so much that he built for himself habitations of wood, mud and stone, and surrounded them with fortifications for the safe-keeping of his utensils and his cattle and to guard against the attacks of others of his kind. He added to his implements, his utensils, his weapons, and his ornaments by learning to manipulate metals—he had left the age of stone and entered the age of bronze. He built villages on the waters at the edges of lakes, safe from marauding animals and men. He made for himself personal gods, with idols and appointed officials to interpret the method of worship—priesthood had come into being. His council chiefs became organised into a close corporation, limiting election of officials to members of their families—aristocracy was born. He learnt how to picture ideas instead of objects, so developing his means of communicating by writing.

His garden cultivation grew into field

culture by the discovery of iron and the subsequent invention of the ploughshare. He now changed his habitation into towns surrounded with walls and battlements. His growing wealth and aristocratic privileges brought on the first great class struggle—the struggle between man and woman as to who should own and bequeath the store of wealth that had accumulated. Man won and changed the law of inheritance from the male to the female. Individual ownership of property and to some extent the private ownership of land followed.

With the discovery of letter script and its use for writing records man entered into his own as a civilised being. The rest is a matter of history.

Reader, the above is a painfully brief and scrappy description of man's development during prehistoric times. If you would enter fully into the romance consult the books on the subject that abound and you will have no cause for regret. Most of what is written above you will find in "Ancient Society," a book written by Lewis H. Morgan. Look for it in the library.

GILMAC.

### A LOOK ROUND.

#### THESE BIRTH CONTROLLERS!

When we read that "it is from among the population of 'can't works,' and 'won't works,' and 'ca-cannys' that we are chiefly recruiting our population," we anticipate the superior person with the chemist shop economy:—

Ignorant people and paid agitators talk of "change of system," when what we really need is "change of individuals"—health, strength, character, these will allow us in future to increase slowly, but for the moment we need a drastic operation to stop the cancer of poverty which is slowly degenerating our fine nation."—(Bessie Drysdale, *New Generation*, March.)

Not understanding what it implies, the birth controller thinks it ignorant to talk and organise for a "change of system." To suggest a change of "individuals" while retaining a system that enslaves and degrades the masses, is as meaningless as the Christian talk of "Change of Heart." Apparently the writer is ignorant of the fact that even in the days of chattel slavery human labour power produced considerably more than was needed to maintain the producers. The machinery and applied science of to-day has laid the foundation of a society in which (when capitalist ownership is

abolished) all could enjoy luxury with a minimum of effort. Did the workers' conditions improve after the great slaughter of 1914-18? Have the Malthusian advocates never heard of wheat burnt as fuel, or fish given away as manure in order to inflate market prices? Don't they know that capitalist statisticians admit that an idle few take nine-tenths of the wealth the workers produce to-day? The Socialist seeks through the self-interest of the workers to change the system because that system is run in the interest of those who are parasites on the social organism. If urging the producers of wealth to gain the comfort for themselves that they make possible for others is an ignorant proposal, then the sooner the workers become ignoramuses the better.

\* \* \*

#### IF MARX HAD ONLY BEEN ENGLISH

Experience has taught us that our opponents' claim to be able to show the fallacies of Socialist principles never materialises in written or oral debate. It is easy to impute to Socialists a travesty of Marx's teaching. When equal opportunity to state their case is allowed to those whose principles are based on such teaching, those scientifically based principles win easily. This fact was given emphasis in a recent debate with one of our comrades at Leyton. Despite our opponents' claim to be able to show Marx's Labour theory of value unsound, his efforts merely resulted in a lengthy discourse upon the nationality and exile of Marx, coupled with a number of puerile contradictions. The former cheap sneer relies upon that virus of Nationalism. A clerical gent, whose intellectual offerings in an anti-Socialist journal are on a level with the flat earth theory, has also something to say on the matter. Let it speak:—

England is no land to change her generous ideals for the enslaving and destructive principles of a German Jew who rewarded her kindness to him in his exile with an unquenchable hatred.—(Prebendary Gough, *New Voice*, Mar.)

Think of some of the generous ideals capitalism generates for the workers—wars, poverty, prostitution, filthy slums, and the hopeful outlook of the scrap heap. How sad it would be to abandon such ideals for the constructive proposals embodied in the life-work of Marx. That work is summarised in our principles. Their application would

abolish the cause of such anomalies by the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

#### CAPITALISM'S INCENTIVE.

What solicitude our opponents profess to have for the future welfare of the people with talents. Under Socialism, they tell us, ability would decline owing to lack of incentive. An interesting sidelight on the treatment meted out to-day to those who show any ability above the average is contained in the following. Out of a list of pensions (15) granted during the year ending March 31st, 1924, under the provisions of the Civil List Act, 1910, totalling £1,190, we quote the following average cases:—

Mr. William Poel, in recognition of his services in connection with the advancement of dramatic production, £100. Miss Charlotte Mew in recognition of the merit of her poetic works, £75. Mr. Robert Dunlop in recognition of his services to historical study, £75. Dr. Alice Lee, D.Sc., in recognition of her services to the cause of scientific research, £70.—(Whittakers, 1925.)

What silent commentary upon present-day incentive! Scarcely a week passes but we read of enormous sums changing hands in the buying and selling of the dolls of the wealthy drones. A glaring headline informs us that it cost "£30,000 to dress a Venus—2 fur coats £12,000," etc. ("Star," 13/3/25). For the labours of those who render some useful service to posterity—an amount truly indicative of our masters' canting pretence for the welfare of ability. Socialism would encourage excellence in every branch of human activity. Freed from the uncertainty of the future, and with the best conditions prevailing for all, those who may excel will not be relegated to obscurity on a capitalist pittance. They will merit something infinitely greater, the approbation and respect of the whole of society, whose interests will be their own.

MAC.

#### S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

##### LONDON DISTRICT.

- Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.
- Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garsault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.
- Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.
- Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garsault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.
- Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A. L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Bruce-grove, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

THE  
**Socialist Standard**  
The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 251. Vol. 21.]

LONDON, JULY, 1925.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## IS COMPENSATION OF THE CAPITALIST POSSIBLE?

Under the heading of a "Socialist Dilemma," the *New Statesman* describes the contortions of the Independent Labour Party, in conference assembled. It seems that they struck a snag. Not that this is unusual or unique. A party that views society as a vessel that will imperceptibly drift into the port of Socialism, with occasional help from a pole in difficult places, is bound to find snags. As one of their leaders put it some years back: "Socialism will come as a thief in the night." Frankly, we never liked the comparison, but equally frankly, we never liked the I.L.P. We have even said they are not a Socialist party at all. We say so still, and perhaps their latest dilemma will illustrate our differences. What is this great question that agitates the I.L.P. after its thirty odd years of vigorous torpidity? What is this tough nut that defied the teeth of the delegates assembled and had to be referred back to the branches for another year? It is, briefly, compensation versus confiscation. Shall we buy the Capitalist class out or kick them out? Small wonder the delegates were flabbergasted. Thirty years of "Socialist" propaganda doesn't leave much time for questions of that sort. Leave it another twelve-month. Perhaps by next year's Conference another dilemma will have become sufficiently prominent to enable them to forget the last one. And, anyhow, one must have something to discuss during the hot weather, mustn't one?

Before dealing with this profound enigma, it may be useful to enquire what has caused

this sudden interest in such a question. Obviously it arises from the possibility of the Labour Party finding itself in power as well as office at a future date. This possibility exists, and it must be faced. Having made itself look as much like the late Liberal Party as possible; having broadened its base until it is all width and no depth; having stuffed itself full of Colonels, Majors, Knights, Solicitors and Clergymen; the possibility is becoming a probability with all its awkward implications. But why awkward? Because if the Labour Party is returned to power, it will be by the votes of people who are not in favour of real Socialism; who will have been told that nationalisation is Socialism; who will be doomed to be immensely undeceived within a few short months; and who, with the increasing worsening of conditions under Capitalism, will become increasingly desperate. But the Labour Party wants power. To get power it must capture the votes of politically ignorant people. And if politically ignorant people are told that the advent of the Labour Party to power means that their five shillings in the bank will be nationalised as well as the railways, they will not vote for the Labour Party. So that, as it is easier to trick and cajole people into voting for you than to educate them, the question arises, what sort of a tale shall we tell them?

This is where the Nemesis that will ultimately destroy the I.L.P. and the reformers generally, appears. They have insistently propagated the doctrine that Socialism was

an evolutionary process of which the steps were nationalisation or public ownership. The Post Office has been repeatedly quoted as an example of Socialism in being. Now, say the opponents of nationalisation are you going to compensate the shareholders of concerns taken over by the State or are you going to confiscate? If the first, where are you going to get the money; if the second, where are you going to stop, and what are the distinctions you are going to make? This lands the reformer into a labyrinth of discussion on State Bonds, Sinking Funds, Tax Relief, and other financial jargon, together with interminable difficulties with small investors, savings bank depositors, and petty enterprise generally. We do not recollect it, but the *New Statesman* assures us, there was a time when the I.L.P. was whole-heartedly in favour of confiscation. That was when power and office seemed remote. The obvious absurdities consequent on trying to reconcile piecemeal nationalisation with confiscation would have given pause to any party but the I.L.P. They did not see that railway companies owned land; that engineering companies owned railway shares; that colliery companies owned engineering shares; that shipping companies held colliery shares; in short, that Capitalism was a system. They therefore did not see that to confiscate the capital of one basic industry was inherently as difficult as to confiscate the Capitalist system. That is if the *New Statesman* is right. Our recollection is that the I.L.P. has always stood for State Ownership on the lines of the Post Office, existing shareholders simply becoming Government Bondholders. Their view was and is that when a sufficiency of industries were thus nationalised the resulting state of things would be called Socialism. Their view always implies compensation, for wherein essentially does the holder of Government shares differ from the holder of company shares? Shareholding implies profits, and profits connote unpaid labour. So that the I.L.P. has always floundered in an illogical morass. How they are to get out of it will provide them with some food for thought. We shall watch their deliberations with some interest. If they pursue them far enough they may discover that Socialism is not a narrow principle which can be applied in homoeopathic doses

to the body politic, and so cure it of a chronic malady. They may discover that Capitalism is a system of society based upon, and permeated throughout with, the robbery of productive labour; that Socialism is a system that will have for its basis, the return to labour of the whole fruits of its industry. They may discover that the two systems are so fundamentally different as to be entirely incompatible; that the replacing of the one by the other, necessarily involves the complete change we term a revolution. That revolution may be peaceful or otherwise. It can be peaceful only by the majority of people realising the nature of society, the supreme need for the change, and the overwhelming necessity for capturing the political machinery by a clear and conscious effort. Faint and woolly formulae, speciously designed, appeals to ill-informed, politically ignorant people, can only result in the other sort of revolution, the non-peaceful. The Socialist Party has no wish for a bloody revolution. That is why we have had to devote so much time to the denunciation of the I.L.P. and the other reformist bodies, whose activities can only result in that catastrophe. Our policy is less flamboyant, and consequently our growth is slower. Our appeal is to the intellect rather than the emotions. We want people to think; Capitalism will see that they feel.

So that to solemnly debate at this date, compensation versus confiscation implies an ignorance, a divorce from reality, pitifully amazing—if it were not the I.L.P. Socialism means the taking from their present owners, of the means whereby society exists, and their conversion into social property. With what shall we compensate? With what *should* we compensate? With what *can* we compensate? Money? Money will cease to exist. Shares? Shares are a form of parasitism, peculiar to Capitalism. Property? They will have enough: so will the rest of society. What else? Nothing! There is nothing else. We shall therefore confiscate.

W. T. H.

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## THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Foundations of Christianity," by Karl Kautsky. (Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 16s.)

Social movements and organisations are often claimed to be due to the power or personality of some individual or "great" man. In religious circles, due to the fear or ignorance of those following these movements, this view of a "great" or "good" man is carried to the point where the supposed founder is claimed as a saint or even a God. Buddhism and Mahomedanism are examples of the "saint" view, while Christianity is the great example where the supposed founder is claimed by large numbers of his followers as being God.

Since the days when Marx and Engels published their joint discovery—later independently formulated by L. H. Morgan—that the methods of wealth production formed the bases of human societies, while the development of the tools and technical processes furnished the source of the changes in those Societies, the "great man" theory has been steadily losing ground. Even in Psychology orthodox Professors, like McDougal, following in the footsteps of Maudsley and Spencer (though in a manner far inferior to these writers) now include social forces as important factors in the building up of the Mind.

Kautsky's volume is an examination of the conditions that gave rise to the birth and early development of Christianity, using the Marxian discovery, generally known as the Materialist Conception of History, as a tool in his researches and studies. Kautsky does not set out to condemn Christianity but to explain it, and the result is a brilliant piece of work, calm, dignified and full of information. He accepts the case presented by Bruno Bauer to show that the Christ of Christianity ever existed. But, more startling still, Kautsky claims that there is no need for Christ to have existed in order to explain the birth and rise of Christianity! Christianity without Christ will seem either rank blasphemy, or at least a contradiction in terms, to the orthodox. Undeterred by such seemings, Kautsky patiently builds up a powerful case in support of his proposition. His presentation is so compact that it is difficult to make a summary of it. We will therefore content ourselves with giving one or two of the main points and refer our

readers to the book itself for the arguments and evidence in support of Kautsky's case.

In the period immediately preceding the rise of Christianity degeneration had already begun in the Western world. The peasant producer—the backbone of the early Roman power—had been steadily crushed out by the growth of large estates worked by slave labour—the latifundia. Contrary to the view of some historians, the latifundia was not a progressive but a retrograde movement. It marks not an advance, but a decline in the career of a society. The peasant has a personal interest in his land, crops, tools, etc., and, within the narrow limits in which he moved, would use any technical improvement that came his way. The slave not only has no interest in these things but, on the contrary, develops an antagonism that results in his doing all the injury he can to the master he hates. The slave would take "revenge" for the whippings he received by ill-treating the animals in his charge, breaking the tools and instruments he used, and neglecting to take simple precautions in the crops, etc. The only thing that made the slave worth while was his cheapness. Hence the constant wars of Rome in the search for new sources of cheap slaves as the old sources were exhausted.

Along with this growth of the latifundia there developed the concentration of power into the hands of an individual—the Cæsar—which not only killed political life and thought for the mass of the people, but led to decay of the social sentiment and turned people's thoughts to individual matters. These facts prepared the soil that, later on, was to accept the Christian notion of the individual being solely concerned with his own "salvation" and intent on making his peace with God.

Christianity arose among the Jews. Kautsky traces the history of this famous race in the period preceding Christianity and shows how the defeat and Exile of the Jews developed both their religion and Monotheism. The religion formed a common bond between the various tribes, while the fact that the various tribal Gods had been unable to avert defeat and disgrace led to the idea, already vaguely existing in Egypt, Babylonia and Persia, of a single all-powerful God who allowed this disgrace to fall upon his chosen people because they offended against his laws. When—the

legend ran—they had passed through a sufficient period of repentance God would lead them to victory over all other nations.

When the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem the class divisions already existing became accentuated. The wealthy class wished for peace to allow of them enriching themselves further, while the exploited class looked to the fulfilment of God's promise (to set the chosen people over other nations) for the release from their miseries. Both classes realised that they were too weak numerically to conquer such a power, for example, as Rome. But God would send a Messiah to lead them to victory. Hence the continual revolts in Jerusalem and the religious character of the rebels. The rich people were denounced as traitors for not supporting these revolts. Each rising brought forth its "Messiah," who was the true elect of God—till he was defeated, when he was condemned as an imposter. In course of time these "Messiahs" became numerous and if Christ ever lived at all, it must have been as a rebel at the head of one of these conspiracies. His execution, if it took place, is only explainable on this ground.

The word "Christus" is the Greek for "Messiah." Hence, in translation into Greek, all those who had proclaimed themselves Messiahs were called "Christs." The rebel and, of course, religious organisation that was formed shortly before the fall of Jerusalem would, because of the conditions mentioned above, be proletarian in character, and portions of the early Gospels reflect this position. Originally the Jews had been an agricultural race but on the return from Exile their lack of land and other factors left them with trade as their chief occupation. But the old land routes for commerce had been superseded, to a great extent, by the development of sea travel through the Greeks and Phoenicians, and this was a basic factor in the dispersal of the Jews. When Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews dispersed, the above-mentioned religious organisation became a congregation that started making converts outside the Jews. At first it retained its proletarian character, but as the priesthood developed and became established, it began to angle for the favour, and funds, of rich people. To entice rich people into such a congregation, however, it was necessary to modify

its rebellious teachings. So first the various legends and later the Gospel writings were "edited" both for the purpose of cutting out objectionable statements and interpolating ones flattering to the rich. According to the legend, Christ had promised to return to earth to lead his Apostles to Heaven, during their own lives. His failure to keep his promise enabled the editors to vary phrases and sentences to suit themselves. Moreover, the civil wars in Rome had died down and the ruling power was not only more free to deal with rebellious bodies, but to show, by the huge forces at their disposal, the utter hopelessness of any revolt. Thus, due to the changed conditions, the teachings of Christianity turned from that of a rebellious character into one that was servile and cringing.

These developments, as well as several later ones, are worked out with a wealth of evidence by Kautsky and the book can be strongly recommended to every serious student as a sound and scientific explanation of the rise of a social phenomenon that is usually hidden under a heap of religious rubbish.

J. F.

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## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS.

### THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

(Continued from last month).

#### THE MACHINE AGE.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there were then three powerful states in which the class with free bourgeois property, alone or, in England, in conjunction with a commercialised landed-class, ruled society.

It is well to bear in mind the economic stage that had been reached. A majority of the population still lived either wholly or in part on the land. All industry was on a relatively small scale with tools that were individually operated. Production for sale was widespread, but not universal as it is to-day. The supply of materials and the marketing of the product was largely in the hands of merchants and great trading companies. The merchant capitalists had a powerful hold over industry, but the genuine industrial capitalists were few and relatively unimportant.

The workers—the "common people"—were illiterate, inarticulate and unorganised. For the most part they accepted without question the lowly position and toil to which Providence for its higher purposes had consigned them, and they looked upon the affairs of government as the natural and rightful monopoly of "their betters," the "gentlemen," the "people of quality," elegance and education.

But into the apparently stable, easy-going complacent world of eighteenth-century England burst an economic tornado that was destined to sweep the whole "bag of tricks" into the museum of antiquities and to create a new civilisation. This power was that child of science and economic necessity—the industrial revolution.

As machine-production extended itself to an ever wider sphere of industry, the whole complexion of social relations was transformed. Of little significance hitherto, the class of capitalist factory-owners now waxed fat in wealth and importance. But at the opposite social pole there gathered an ever-swelling multitude of propertyless wage-earners, factory hands, machine-driven and disciplined, separated entirely from the soil and herded, amid unpre-

cedented squalor, into dismal industrial towns scattered over the coalfields.

The slow, steady controllable methods of the age of hand-tools were replaced by the uncontrolled production of commodities en masse, by a ceaseless effort to cheapen production and by a wild competitive scramble to sell. In an industrial anarchy without parallel the only regulation and order came through the blind balance of the market, through the inexorable operation of economic forces. "Economic law"—that made and unmade—became the "divine principle" of a new philosophy of social life. Its prophets were the "economists." They endeavoured to convince the workers as they had succeeded in convincing themselves that the wealth of the rich and the destitution of the poor were due to the "natural," "eternal" laws of wealth creation that could neither be avoided, controlled, nor—with safety—interfered with.

The bible of the new thought was the "Wealth of Nations," by Adam Smith, one of the most practically effective books ever written. In it was put forward not alone the economic theory of unbridled competition, but its natural, ethical accompaniment, that the general happiness of society is best secured by the assiduous devotion of individuals to their own interests. In the turmoil of the economic scramble, unlimited wealth and power seemed open to the man of initiative, nerve, organising ability and—capital. Competition, emulation, struggle, were elevated to the dignity of moral principles. The duty of "getting on" was proclaimed. "Hard work" became a virtue par excellence—though not always practised by its preachers. The conviction that the individual is superior to, and can dominate the "fell clutch of circumstance," gained a hold upon men's minds.

The idea of "progress" as an accepted moral principle dates from this dawn period of industrialism. For the first time in history men could see society being transformed before their eyes—not the mere outward change of political forms or the disruption due to war, but a steady, unceasing

progression in one constant direction. For the first time men in general could predict the certainty of development in the future. Men no longer worshipped the past—the “good old days”—they looked ahead, and let their imaginations play tricks. To stand still, to stagnate, became a moral evil—to move, to progress, a moral excellence.

Amongst the political adaptations to the economic needs of the new era the most outstanding were those resultant upon the doctrine of “laissez faire”—the freedom of production and trade from legislative interference, expressed in the “liberalism” of Cobden and the “Manchester School.” The old restrictive Navigation Acts and the Corn Laws were abolished and all fetters removed upon the perfect liberty to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. Upon the principle of “unfettered production” the fullest exploitation of the worker, regardless of life or health or age or sex, was justified, and it was nominally on the ground that they were “restraints upon trade” that the early trades unions were declared illegal in the Combination Acts of 1799-1800, and thus the attempts of the workers at organised resistance forcibly repressed by the State.

The politics of the “new age” were soon also violently complicated by the struggle of the new capitalists for political power. The necessity of the conflict sprang largely from the fact that the industrial revolution had transferred the mass of production and population to the north and west, areas hitherto thinly populated and economically of little importance. Large industrial towns, such as Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, were entirely without representation in Parliament. A further factor of importance, however, was that the new industrial conditions had produced a large, politically conscious body of lesser capitalists with an intense appreciation of the rights and privileges of property—their property, and intolerant of political control by the landlords and merchant princes.

The great reform struggle lasted some forty years and was bitterly contested by the ruling oligarchy. In the hope, encouraged by the bourgeois reformers that they stood to gain, large masses of the workers were drawn into the conflict which again and again reached open violence. At length, amid intense public excitement, the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, which re-

distributed seats in accordance with existing economic facts and extended the franchise to some half-million large and smaller property owners. This was the final victory in England of free property over landed privilege—of the precious yellow metal over “precious” blue blood.

R. W. HOUSLEY.  
(To be continued.)

### “THE ANTI-FASCISTS.”

#### THEIR REJOINDER AND OUR REPLY.

Comrades,

Our reply will be brief. It is a dirty game you play. It is exactly the game we expect the Fascists to play, and we are well prepared to meet it. You would suggest that we are not willing to disclose *all* (italics, please—they were yours) our books to the public. Very well, examine them for yourself. They are here. Will it be necessary to turn out our pockets also? They are very light—and that by reason of our Socialist activity. We can prove that, too.

We note also that Mr. “H.” like Mr. “A.” and the Fascists we have had to deal with, prefers cover. Fortunately, we have others means of defending ourselves, and need not depend on the very precarious indulgence of that abstraction you call Ed. Com.

You will note that we address you as “comrades,” and that we subscribe ourselves.

Yours fraternally,

ALFRED HOLDSWORTH,  
Editor, *The Clear Light*.

#### REPLY.

Mr. Holdsworth seems to find it difficult to believe that any statement can mean just what it says and no more. We said that freak organisations are usually fair game for the political job-hunter, and further that if the N.U.C.F. made all its meetings and books freely accessible to the public as does the Socialist Party, it would show that it is not so affected. Instead of telling us that the N.U.C.F. does, or will, allow the public free access to all its meetings and books, Mr. Holdsworth offers to let us examine the books; something we are not the least concerned to do.

The remarks on “cover” are merely silly. We published a criticism of the

N.U.C.F. Its validity depends on the nature of the evidence provided, but instead of answering the charges made, Mr. Holdsworth prefers to beat the air about a supposed accusation, which was, in fact, never made at all. The soundness of the charges does not in the least depend on the identity of Mr. “H.” It is perhaps for this reason that Mr. Holdsworth prefers not to accept our invitation to defend the N.U.C.F. in our columns.

In passing, it is interesting to note that the N.U.C.F. is also guilty of the “crime” of publishing contributions in its organ without disclosing the identity of the writer.

We do not know what Mr. Holdsworth was trying to express by the words, “precarious indulgence of that abstraction you call Ed. Com.,” but it certainly supports our charge that the literature of the N.U.C.F. is obscurely written.

Why Mr. Holdsworth calls us “Comrades” we do not know? We do not know that we have done anything to deserve this, “the most unkindest cut of all.” We have made it perfectly clear that we regard the N.U.C.F. as an anti-working class organisation. We gave our reasons and our evidence and are still waiting for Mr. Holdsworth or some other representative to explain why we should alter our opinion. Our columns are still open for them to do so. Ed. Com.

### THE ECONOMICS OF PAYING.

It is irritating to the majority of workers to be told that the enormous expenditure incurred in running the capitalist system in its various departments is a matter of no concern to them. Schooled by the masters and their decoys in false economics, they fall easy victims to the delusion that they “Pay for everything.” Dimly conscious of the fact that it is the working class who alone engage in the various functions necessary to the production and distribution of wealth (including management and supervision), they allow a hazy class sentiment to warp their economic reasoning; producing everything by no means involves paying for everything. An instance of how the press plays upon the workers’ lack of knowledge in order to hide the facts is contained in the following:—

The man in work is becoming more and more restless at the constant strain upon his re-

sources, having to carry not only his own burden of maintenance, but the burden of a million or more out-of-works as well (Democrat, 25/4/25).

Well might the worker ask why this concern, if the burdens are his and not those of the capitalist class? Beneath this superficial observation lies the true explanation. The workers are a slave class; they are as much slaves as their progenitors, the chattel and the serf, but in place of previous methods the worker receives his subsistence to-day through a money payment, he is a wage slave. To the chattel his whole labour appeared to be given gratis, to the wage worker his whole effort appears to be paid for. Behind this payment lurks the secret of modern methods of exploitation: ever since the dawn of slavery human energy has sustained a set of unproductive idlers out of the wealth produced beyond that required for the sustenance of the producers. As with the slave of ancient society, so with the modern wage slaves, the wealth they produce is the property of the masters. Its proportionate increase is enormous owing to the increased powers of mankind over nature’s materials. This surplus over and above the value of the workers’ wages is called by the Socialist “surplus value.” Out of this surplus, whether its form be rent, interest, or profit, its owners have to meet the expenses of their profit-making system, i.e., wars, pauperism, crime, etc. Fellow-workers, heed not your masters’ canting cry about “burdens,” they are his, and in order to economise as far as possible he would have you think them yours. Whatever the total of the prices of the necessities required to sustain your wealth-producing capacity must be given to you as a wage. Failing this, you will be driven to take measures to maintain your standard of living, or your labour power will deteriorate to your employers’ disadvantage.

Why fritter your time away on matters that leave you bottom dog. Recognise the real and ultimate contest must be between masters and slaves. In numbers you are overwhelming, armed with the knowledge of your usefulness as a class, no power can withstand you. MAC.

### NOTE.

A lengthy criticism of our attitude towards religion by Mr. A. McArthur and our reply thereto will appear next month.

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1925

**WORKING CLASS EDUCATION.****THE FAILURE OF THE LABOUR COLLEGES.**

By dint of strenuous and persistent agitation the National Council of Labour Colleges (N.C.L.C.) has won its fight for recognition by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. It and the London Labour College are to be permitted to take part in an Educational Scheme in co-operation with their old enemies the W.E.A., Ruskin College and the Co-operative Educational Committee. The participating bodies are to retain their separate organisations and machinery, and each may continue to operate independently any educational scheme it can arrange in addition to the joint scheme.

Elated by being recognised the Plebs League and other supporters of the N.C.L.C. appear not to have recognised that this event has a quite other significance. No doubt it represents a personal success for the active N.C.L.C. workers, and a propaganda victory for the organisation; but it also signifies the death of an idea, it gives the final blow to the theory of Independent Working Class Education which they have proclaimed and popularised.

The scheme means co-operation with those organisations which in the past have been

denounced by the N.C.L.C. and the Plebs League as camouflaged instruments of Capitalist propaganda. Against this the right to operate separate schemes is of little value. A circular addressed to Plebs members by a Plebs E.C. sub-committee admits that in practice "individual Unions . . . would probably sooner or later feel it incumbent upon them to transfer their support to any general scheme approved by Congress."

Nominally, the freedom of action of the N.C.L.C. is guaranteed by a paragraph which concedes "the rights of criticism on propaganda" to the separate organisations "provided that there shall be mutual abstention from criticism of the good faith of any educational organisations recognised by the T.U.C. . . ." A moment's thought will show it to be an inadequate safeguard, and this the Plebs E.C. feel for they urge "the importance of getting a clear decision at the outset of exactly what is implied by the paragraph." Can one describe the W.E.A. as a body of Capitalist apologists built up on Capitalist money without "criticising their good faith?"

In passing, one cannot but ask if the Plebs Leaguers really do believe that working class education is likely to be assisted by the association of mutually warring elements claiming to speak from fundamentally different standpoints. Clarity goes the way of independence and confusion comes into undisputed possession.

The Plebs E.C., while supporting the entry of the N.C.L.C. into the scheme, try to "have it both ways." They comfort themselves with the argument that "The Plebs League, not being bound by the agreement or signatory to it, will in any case retain the fullest freedom of criticism, and as before show that co-operation with Capitalist-controlled universities and dependence on financial grants from non-working-class sources (as practised by the W.E.A.) are inconsistent with working-class independence."

The logic is curious. It is wrong for the W.E.A. to associate with Capitalist Universities but not wrong for the N.C.L.C. to associate with the W.E.A., although it always used to be wrong. The N.C.L.C. is right in signing away its independence and Plebs members are to support them in doing so; but in the same breath the Plebs

congratulate themselves because they are not doing what it is right for the N.C.L.C. to do.

If the Plebs do continue to denounce the W.E.A. they will find it a little difficult to explain why they urged the N.C.L.C. to co-operate with the W.E.A.

And, moreover, what in fact will be the value of the "fullest freedom of criticism" which the Plebs will continue to enjoy? The "Plebs Magazine," the chief vehicle of criticism, happens to be the *organ of the N.C.L.C.*, which is giving up its "fullest freedom of criticism." It is perhaps good propaganda for the vanquished to go on claiming the right to fight while giving up their arms to the victors; but it is not war.

The reasons why this co-operation appears as a desirable object are frankly stated in the Plebs circular. They are the threatened loss of financial aid from Trade Unions and the fear of being "left outside the main field of Trade Union educational activity." These admissions bear out what we have always contended—that the movement for "Independent Working class Education" never was really independent. Because their "educational policy," in the words of the Plebs E.C., "has been from the beginning to win "Trade Union support," the N.C.L.C. had to proclaim and the Labour Colleges had to teach theories which did not offend the reactionary members and officials of the Unions which put up the cash.

To please the miners they were forced to pretend that industrial organisation is the method of achieving working-class emancipation. It is a cruel fate which has reduced the Miners Federation to a state of confessed impotence.

They styled themselves Marxians, but had to take great care, when explaining the significance of Imperialism, not to give offence by exposing the part played by the Trade Union officials in leading the workers into the war.

They talked of the need for revolutionising society, but had to keep on good terms with the Labour Party opponents of revolution.

They followed the popular school of orthodox economists of the Tory, Liberal and Labour Parties in regarding inflation of currency as the chief cause of high prices in Great Britain. Events have here, too, rewarded them unkindly. Although we have

returned practically to 1914 currency conditions, including gold export, yet prices remain 75 per cent. above 1914 level.

The hard truth is that independence can be had only at a price. You cannot base an educational system on the urgent need for the overthrow of Capitalism and yet honestly gain the financial support of Trade Unions whose members would not approve the overthrow of Capitalism. Still less can you avoid discussion of the ways and means of achieving emancipation, and if ways and means are to be discussed you cannot escape the responsibility of approving or condemning particular theories and existing industrial and political policies.

To try to teach Marxism without pointing out the political implications of the class struggle is to rob it of its meaning and value. The exponents of Independent Working Class Education set out determined to preserve their independence; but they also wanted to succeed and show tangible results, a very human but, nevertheless, dangerous weakness. The price of independence in the existing state of working class indifference and political backwardness is to be "left outside the main field of Trade Union Educational activity," and the N.C.L.C. and the Plebs have just decided that the price is too great.

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### THE ROAD TO POWER.

#### AN EXPOSURE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN GERMANY AND THEIR ALLIES.

In the June "Labour Monthly," Mr. M. Philips Price, writing under the title "The Great Retreat," gives a useful account of the position of the German working class since 1918, dealing in particular with the impotence of the Social Democratic Party and the treachery of its leaders. He quotes from a recent book, "Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik" (From Empire to Republic by Richard Mueller, a Social Democrat who, in 1919 was chairman of the Berlin Workers' Council. Mueller states (Vol. II., page 112) that when his council after the armistice drew up plans for the immediate workers' control of industry in Berlin, the "Social Democratic Trade Union leaders protested; they had already signed an agreement with the employers which was neither known to us nor to the public." This agreement, it appears, bound the Trade Unions not to demand "any kind of workers' control over the employers or insight into their financial transactions, in return for which the workers should get the eight-hour day." (Price.) The ensuing years have shown, as might be expected, that even the eight-hour day was not to be safe when it suited the employers to attack it.

To excuse their refusal to attack the employers at so opportune a moment, these leaders argued that if such an attack were made the allies would at once stop the supply of food for the starving. This was officially denied by the American Government, and the "Temps" (November 16th, 1918) declared that "The conditions which President Wilson put for the supply of food to Germany did not come from him, but were suggested to him by the German Chancellor himself." (The Chancellor was the Social Democrat Ebert.) Again, the capitalist paper the "Frankfurter Zeitung" announced, "In actual fact, M. Clemenceau is quite indifferent to what form of government there is in Germany, whether it is Capitalistic or Socialistic, if Liebknecht is crowned Kaiser in Prussia or Prince Henry is elected President of the Republic in Kiel."

What really happened was that "Vorwaerts" (Social Democrat Official Organ) got someone to telegraph to it from Holland that "the food which has been obtained

abroad for Germany is being held back by the American Government because it is not certain if Germany can guarantee that she will have a free constitution . . ."

Ebert, when asking the U.S.A. for food for Germany, worded his telegram "provided that public order prevails there." (Vol. II., page 118.)

This treachery was engineered, of course, to please the employing class, and to dissuade the workers from listening to the minority, who urged an attack on their class enemies.

The disclosure of these actions is useful, chiefly because it emphasises what we have always taught, that the workers can never afford to place uncontrolled power in the hands of leaders, no matter what their record and views may be. It is, however, no less essential to view these actions against the background provided by the general conditions and our knowledge of the rank and file. We must avoid the groundless assumption that different leadership could have altered the result materially.

The Socialist knows that there must be a majority of the working class understanding and determined on achieving Socialism before the real tasks of the socialistic revolution can even be begun. Given such a majority in possession of the machinery of government, with the powers and in the position of a ruling class, nothing but a possible capitalist revolt can stand between the workers and their object. Such a revolt would, in the nature of things, be doomed to failure, and need cause anxiety only to those who may be misguided enough to resist the forces of the State when the workers control those forces. We do not seek a majority out of any merely sentimental attachment to the idea of democracy. We need a majority because our aim is Socialism, and Socialism is democratic or it is nothing at all; only self-deception allows the belief that Capitalism is any the less Capitalism because in Russia it is administered by a Communist bureaucracy. Indeed, we do not have to look so far ahead to see the uselessness of minority action. Vain hopes to the contrary notwithstanding, there are not in existence any means by the use of which a minority can seize and keep the powers of government in modern democracies. Those who govern us

on behalf of the Capitalist class do so with the active support or passive consent of the great majority of the workers. To oust them the minority which aspires to power would need to overwhelm not just the Capitalist few, but the mass of the workers as well. Merely to state this is to expose it for a wild and dangerous dream.

And, if further argument be necessary, what one minority could do, another minority could and would endeavour to undo. The knowledge of the numerical weakness of the revolutionary forces would naturally encourage the defeated Capitalists to a new trial of strength. Prolonged civil war may sound fine to young Communists, but Socialism does not from choice select such difficult beginnings.

The German Communists have signally failed to achieve anything tangible and lasting. Anxious for quick results and impatient of educational work to win the support of the workers, they have relied alternately on intrigue with Capitalist parties and on futile violence. They played with extreme nationalism and urged the workers to defend the interests of German Capitalists in the Ruhr against the French and British. They are now reaping their reward.

In the May, 1924, elections they polled over 12 per cent. of the votes cast; in December, 9 per cent.; in March, 1925, 7 per cent.; and in April, 6.4 per cent. The Communist "short cut" does not lead to Socialism.

But while the Communist Party is no longer the danger that it was, those who believe that salvation for the workers lies along the road which is followed by the British Labour Party and the German Social Democratic Party, are more numerous than ever. The Communist does not appreciate the nature or the magnitude of the task of overthrowing Capitalism, and wants to set enthusiasm and pea-shooters against the organised might of the State. The Labour Party aims at organising a majority of the electorate, but does not seek the overthrow of Capitalism at all. It is a party not of Socialism but of reform; not of knowledge but of discontent. It lacks a definite and primary object on which to enforce unity among its self-centred and often hostile elements. Only on one issue is general unanimity possible; that is the search for some ground on which the exploited

and the exploiters can live amicably together. Believing such amity to be possible it rejects the Socialist solution of the abolition of private ownership in the means of life. The Labour Party view is that expressed by Mr. Clynes ("Daily Herald," April 3, 1925): "If all classes can preserve the spirit that carried us through five years of terrible war, we can go forward in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill which will benefit the whole community." We believe on the contrary that the Capitalist class alone have an interest in promoting such co-operation. We want for society the property now owned by the employers, and we do not anticipate that they will yield it up with goodwill. We recall not with pride but with regret, the years when the workers of each nation willingly hated and fought the enemies of their respective sections of the ruling class. We urge not co-operation but the acceptance of the truth of our peacetime and wartime slogan "The enemy of the working class is the master class."

And because the Labour Parties are not fighting for any fundamental change their method of organising is quite unlike that which is required to win Socialism. The Labour Parties command millions of votes and the support of thousands of active and devoted workers. They have highly-organised and richly-financed political machines for winning elections, and a press of growing power with which they endeavour to mould opinion. The Socialist Party lacks these things because its aim is Socialism, and there are as yet too few Socialists to make such widespread organisation possible. But of what use to the working class are these millions of votes cast for Labour candidates and these electoral victories leading as they do merely to "colossal" parliamentary battles about taxes on silk stockings and such trivialities? Germany developed such a party well nigh to perfection and next to Germany, England. And what is there to show for it all?

They boast of the reforms, old age pensions, insurance schemes which have been initiated or at least amended through the influence they are able to exercise on the various governments; yet in spite of all, the condition of the workers gets worse year by year, and was getting worse for a decade before the war. This is true of Germany, England and America and of

"our" colonies. It is the worsening conditions imposed by Capitalism which make reforms necessary to the Capitalists, and it is the vague discontent bred of worsening conditions which builds up these huge Labour Parties. The reforms are not the effect of the growing power of the Labour Parties. As George Washington learned by hard experience, "Influence is not Power." The entry of Labour Leaders into Capitalist Cabinets and to their social functions merely shows how easily the non-Socialist rank and file are deceived by the gift of the shadow of power by those who keep tight hold on the substance.

Advising the ruling class what to do to stave off revolutionary discontent is not winning power for the working class. When Capitalism had its time of crisis the leaders and the machinery of the Labour Parties of the warring nations were openly employed to help the master class wage their war. This was the end in England, Germany, France, and in fact in every country the workers of which had followed the same unsound policy. Many have now realised the disastrous failure but have quite misunderstood the underlying causes.

Philips Price is one of these. He knows well the black record of the Social Democrats during the war. He knows how fully they deserved the epithet "the Kaiser's Socialists," and he must see that their policy after the armistice could not become suddenly and completely different from that which they had pursued before. But what he fails to see is that long years before the war the ground was being prepared and the harvest could be no other than it was and is. For him as for most of those who criticise the Social Democrats, 1914 was the year when what he calls "the pillar of the old International, the party of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht" threw over its Socialism and betrayed the workers of Germany. Thus he writes, for instance, that "an aristocracy has risen up *during the last ten years in the party*" (italics mine). This simply is not true. To the Socialist Party of Great Britain the internal rottenness and anti-Socialist outlook of the German S.D.P. were apparent long before the war, and consistently with our knowledge, we declined to share the current foolish confidence in the Second International. Neither it nor its affiliated societies

were Socialist; how then could it or they take up a Socialist attitude to the war? Years of war were needed to teach this simple lesson to the founders of the Third International.

Yet as long ago as 1896 Bertrand Russell was able to see what was to prove the fatal defect of the S.D.P., although at the time he seems to have anticipated that the weakness would be overcome. In his "German Social Democracy" (1896, Longmans, page 131), he wrote as follows:—

"... the élite of the Party acquire a dominion over their less intelligent and less definite companions; these are often very vague as to what Social Democracy is, and may even retain a liking for the military or a disbelief in Communism, totally inconsistent with the Party Programme." Russell quoted Paul Gohre, whose conclusions on the outlook of the party membership coincided with what he himself observed.

He goes on (page 132):—

"The final aims of the Party, in particular, appear for the most part rather unpopular, so great a change as the abolition of private property was unintelligible to the average working man. The opposition to militarism, too... was not shared, if Gohre may be believed, by any but the official members."

He concludes: "As, however, the official members alone are clear as to the aims to be pursued, and alone decide the choice of candidates, their views alone are represented in Parliament... the views of the rank and file, however different from those which find expression in party literature, do not seem to me to have any great political importance."

Events have shown Bertrand Russell's hope to be ill-founded. The views and lack of views of the rank and file proved to be all-important. Not being Socialists they were as easily led into war as they had been led before the war. Sheep do not at the cry of danger suddenly become lions. It would be absurd to expect those who looked with favour on peace-time militarism to turn against it when their own leaders ranted about the danger to the "Fatherland."

Naturally too, years of wartime propaganda left the Social Democrats, war-weary though they were, still less ready to take a Socialist course of action. Philips Price charges the leaders with giving a wrong

lead in 1919, but what else could he expect? Were the members who supported the German Capitalists in the war the kind of body to carry on a fight against the Capitalists and for Socialism immediately the war ended?

The party did not even command a majority in Germany. In 1919, they polled 45 per cent. of the votes, but that 45 per cent. did not represent Socialist convictions. It was a combination of all kinds of discontent, natural in a war-weary and defeated country, and it rapidly disappeared as the immediate and pressing causes receded. Lack of success soon turned uninstructed enthusiasm into apathy and even hostility, leading eventually to a revival of patriotism.

By 1920 the vote of the S.D.P. had fallen to 42 per cent.; and by 1924 to 20 per cent. Although it rose again this year it reached only 30 per cent., and the issue of recent elections has never been Socialism or anything which plainly challenged the position or privilege of the ruling class.

All the efforts of all the years of S.D.P. activity have led up to the Presidential election of May, 1925, when S.D.P. members had to vote for one avowed Capitalist in order to defeat another avowed Capitalist candidate. They had not even the gratification of selling out to the winning opponent of the working class.

In the meantime our own Labour Party, superior to the lessons of past or contemporary history, gaily treads the same path to the same slaughter.

H.

#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J.G. (Belfast).—Questions on Political Action will be answered in next issue.

#### ERRATA.

On page 350, lines 10 and 11, of last issue (June)—"Men won and changed the law of inheritance from the male to the female." Should read—"Woman won and changed the law of inheritance from the female to the male."

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS FUND.

A list of contributions to date will appear in next issue. Funds are still urgently required for this important object.

### A LOOK ROUND.

#### THE MEANING OF CAPITAL.

A study of past and present human society shows it to be marked off by distinctly different methods of producing and distributing the wealth that maintains such society. Each social economy, chattel slavery, serfdom, capitalism, has had its own particular religion, morals, philosophy, etc., and each system has developed within itself the elements that made possible the revolutionary change to the new social order. These changes mark important steps in the development of mankind.

To analyse and understand the workings and the forces within the capitalist system is the mission of the Socialist. The capitalists and their agents will fight such a method at every step, for it reveals them as a useless but property-owning class. Their wealth is used primarily for their own profit, irrespective of societies' needs. Such profit is obtained without effort on their part, because the value of the workers' means of subsistence for a given time is a minute proportion of the values he can produce in that same time.

Production is carried on to-day for the world's markets, and profit is derived from the unpaid labour of workers who sell their energy in the labour market as a commodity. Only the capitalist system has presented these features in general, and it was not until the present system prevailed that economic wealth became known as capital. (*Evolution of Property Lafargue.*)

Capital is not a thing, it is a definite social relation, it pre-supposes a working class who possess nothing but labour force. In order to spread confusion our opponents often claim that we all possess capital of a sort, we are all capitalists; capital they say may be the workers' health, the poor woman's sewing machine, the navvy's shovel; others, like the I.L.P. and the Labour Party, believe it ought to be publicly owned, while the university professors say it is wealth used to produce further wealth. All fail or pretend to be unable to see that capital is the wealth owned by the capitalists and used to exploit the working class for profit. As Socialism stands for the abolition of exploitation, it stands for the abolition of capital.

**A DOCTOR'S DOPE.**

According to a Dr. Shadwell (Quoted *Observer*, 17/5/25), there are over two hundred definitions of Socialism, which he says are cities of refuge to its apologists since:—

"It is always possible to shift the ground and to say when any particular aspect is criticised that it is not Socialism."

Fortunately Socialists do not rely on definitions, but facts, though there is a maxim that "all colours look alike in the dark." Our pedantic doctor is eager to find some redeeming features of capitalism, especially as there are still Marxians who adhere to the doctrine of the inevitable "increasing misery." He can dispose of them in a few words, thus:—

"There has been a levelling up at one end and a levelling down at the other. It stares one in the face in visible matters of houses, clothes, and locomotion . . . As for clothes, it is no longer possible as it used to be to distinguish classes by clothes . . . and if Capitalists dash about by road in their own cars the proletariat do the same in charabancs." (Ibid.)

We need not weary you with details of the delightful houses you habitate, every snob in the country has said that the dear workers must be better housed (some day), and the object of the Housing Bill, we were told, was to provide cheap houses for "us" (bye and bye). Clothes (*sic*)—we do not judge classes by clothes, but by methods of living, hirers and hired, robbers and robbed, but locomotion—ah! the charabanc, what profligates! Even the publican says, "No charabancs served here." And, despite all, we still adhere to the fact that the workers' conditions can only be measured in relation to the wealth and the pleasures they provide for their hereditary enemies, the capitalists. We fail to find consolation in the fact that when we are dead, other workers may have better houses. We do not appreciate the shoddy, bad fitting garments that cover our ill-fed bodies. Ungrateful scoundrels that we are, we cannot be soothed, because the growth of poverty and pauperism keeps pace with the increase in millionaires. We still want, and will fight on to obtain, the full use of the best that the skill and dexterity of the workers makes possible. We want the world for the workers.

MAC.

**THE LATEST CRITICISM OF KARL MARX.**

We have been asked to deal with a publication called "The Socialist's Bible." It is sold by the "Industrial League and Council," which is one of the many bodies aiming at a reconciliation between the employed and employing classes.

The endless stream of books to prove that Marx was wrong is not only a tribute to Marx in showing how great is the respect his writings still inspire, but it reminds us also how limited and unscientific is the outlook of sections of the propertied class. Not knowing the way in which real social forces work, and quite lacking a sense of proportion, they are told and believe in their simplicity that revolutions are made by the wrongheaded brilliance of the Cromwells, the Rousseaus and the Marxes of history. What, then, could be more natural than the everlasting effort to stop the coming revolution by hurling tomes and pamphlets at the reputation of Marx? How perverse they must think the workers are who go on organising and striking despite, and, in fact, indifferent to the repeated "destruction" of Marxian theories. And how aggravating that the theories keep coming up as fresh and sound as ever although Labourites and Tories, intellectuals and economists have all agreed together that they are as dead as the Dodo.

The anonymous author of this pamphlet "discusses Karl Marx's Theories" in 20 pages, and while going out of his way to appear generous in recognition of the genius of the man, rejects his philosophy in detail and in the lump.

He says nothing that is new, but in case there are novices who may be imposed upon we can perhaps usefully point out some weaknesses in these old restated objections to Marxism. A short sketch of the life of Marx is followed by some silly and ill-informed remarks about his influence on Socialism in England. We are told that few Socialists have ever read Marx, but rely upon "some small explanatory handbook." This is a queer complaint from the author of a 20-page "small explanatory handbook" which is to serve Marx critics in place of reading Marx himself; and worse follows.

Our critic of Marx goes not to Marx for

his references and for a statement of the Marxian case, but to a "small explanatory handbook" by Mr. A. E. Cook. What we get is not a discussion of Marx but a cheap triumph over the grossly inaccurate work of one whose ignorance of Marx has been exposed in the pages of the Socialist Standard.

On page 1 Marx is condemned for not being "scientific and impartial." On page 2 it is admitted that he was scientific enough to "avoid any moral condemnation of the Capitalist," which is a tribute not earned by many active political workers and writers in their attacks on their opponents' theories.

We are told that "Events having falsified his doctrine of social change the followers of Marx do not lay stress upon it." The critic cautiously gives no evidence for the second assertion, but it saved him from the trouble of having to show where the doctrine has been proved false. The Socialist Party of Great Britain regards the doctrine as still unassailable, and is prepared to defend it.

The first volume of "Capital" was published in 1867 and it is argued that "many of the evils which Marx regarded as permanent features of industry have since been removed." Our author does not offer to tell us that the poverty of the poor and the riches of the wealthy are some of the evils which "have since been removed," and they happen to be very important. He forgets, too, that the first Factory Act was passed as early as 1802; and that at the end of the last war it was still necessary to set up numerous Trade Boards to remove "sweating." At the present time we have a Conservative Government compelled to give legal protection against intolerably low wages to the workers in what is almost our chief industry—agriculture. Has poverty passed away—if so why health insurance and pensions for the aged and for widows? Has insecurity been abolished from the lives of the wealth producers in face of 1½ million unemployed dependent on the dole?

The most important of the foundations of the Marxian argument is the increasing disparity between the economic positions of the working and propertied classes. This tendency has not passed away. Relative to the powers of wealth production, the workers, as Marx forecast, have been and are getting worse off. Power and wealth

are concentrated more and more at one end of the social scale, poverty and individual helplessness at the other. Events have justified Marx, not falsified him.

The author of the pamphlet is aware that Marx did not claim that labour is the source of all wealth; that, in fact, he pointed out the absurdity of ignoring the existence of wealth provided by Nature. But he attributes to Marx the assertion that an object "is worth something because it is useful." (Page 4.)

On the contrary, what Marx said was that an article, "therefore, has value only because human labour . . . has been embodied in it." (*Capital*, Vol. I., page 5, 1912 Edition. W. Glaiser.)

This is what comes of going for information to small handbooks.

Objection to the labour theory is made on the ground that "virgin soil or an undeveloped mine have a value for exchange, although no labour has been put into them" (p. 6). He omits, as is usual in this type of argument, to give instances of *virgin* soil, and *undeveloped* mines which have value for exchange. There are at the present day vast areas of land and mineral resources to be had for nothing. When, and not until, the necessary labour has been expended to make the soil usable and both the soil and the minerals accessible to civilisation, will they have exchange value.

There are other points that could be mentioned, but enough has been written to show that even where the criticisms are levelled against Marx and not against Cook, the author makes no real attempt to justify them, and that the basic theories of Marxism have not been seriously attacked, far less demolished.

H.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.**

- Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.
- Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.
- Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.
- Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.
- Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd. every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A. L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W.19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Bruce-grove, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## SOCIALISM AND DARWINISM.

Two of the branches of scientific work that have done more to revolutionise human thought than any others are those known as Darwinism and Socialism. Though both these owe their final achievements to the painstaking research of many previous investigators, it was not until time and development had provided the material for proof and demonstration that they were raised to a scientific position by Darwin and Marx respectively. The previously held belief in a supernatural creation of plants and animals had received rude shocks by the discovery of fossil remains that apparently could not be related to existing species. As new methods of grouping and classification came with increased knowledge a closer examination revealed resemblances between species both fossil and living. The fish and the amphibian, the reptile and the bird, the anthropoid ape and primitive man; could there be a remote relationship? The theory of descent grew. It was at this stage that Darwin undertook his patient investigations. In his autobiography he says:—

"In October, 1838, that is 15 months after I had begun my systematic inquiry, I happened to read for amusement Malthus on population, and, being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long continuous observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. Here then I had at last got a theory by which to work."

In passing we may mention that Malthus was a capitalist apologist who claimed that population increased faster than subsistence, and that therefore working class poverty was inevitable and natural. His

theory was, many years ago, completely shattered by Godwin and Henry George in "On Population," and "Progress and Poverty" respectively. Dr. Alfred Wallace, Darwin's co-worker, showed conclusively in "The Wonderful Century" that even under capitalism during the last century our powers of production increased ten times greater than the population. To aid him in his studies Darwin turned to that branch of plant and animal reproduction that mankind consciously operates upon in order to breed special types, the racehorse or the heavy shire, the whippet or the bulldog, the various breeds of pigeons, all of which can be made to vary more than wild species. Did this artificial selection by which man bred new species have its counterpart in natural forces? In his works "Origin of Species" and "Descent of Man," Darwin showed that it had. The gradual advance of plant and animal life had been brought about by an intense struggle with natural obstacles. The peace and tranquility of nature sung by the poet is an eternal struggle to maintain existence. The lower forms of life have powers of reproduction far in excess of their available subsistence (not civilised humans, note), hence the two great motive forces, the preservation of the individual and the species, are impelling forces to warfare. Those that can defend and protect themselves against enemies and conditions in the struggle for existence by any sort of advantage, acquired from generation to generation, will be the new species "fittest to survive." The failures will be exterminated: The struggle is carried a step further by those animals that live in groups or are gregarious. Their combined powers

give them a new strength of protection both for themselves and their young. Bearing in mind the immense periods of time taken for development in nature's working it will become more clear how such groups developed social feelings, instincts and advantages, that enabled them to struggle successfully right up to the man-like apes, our progenitors in the line of development.

The final step that enables man to emerge from the animal kingdom is the making and use of tools. He acquires the first rudiments of speech and becomes "primitive man." Space only permits of a brief mention of the proofs of the correctness of Darwin's theory. Man within his body contains many rudimentary parts only explicable on the basis of his lowly origin. The physical and mental differences of living races of men are greater than those between the lowest men and the highest apes, and a study of embryology shows that the human embryo recapitulates the whole history of the evolution of the species, the last form left behind being that of the anthropoid ape.

What organs are to the animal world, tools are to mankind. These man-made tools in conjunction with other discoveries give him a great advantage in the struggle for the food supply over the animals, he is indeed able to dominate them and later domesticate them. Struggle at this stage does not cease, it merely takes a different form, those groups or tribes of men who possess better tools and weapons compete more successfully in the conflict and struggle now takes place between tribe and tribe. Further development in tools and methods of production makes the preservation of those captured in conflict desirable, a surplus can be produced, slavery begins:

All history says Marx "is the history of class struggles" (i.e., since the break up of the tribes) and thus he supplies the key:

"In every epoch the prevailing mode of social production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch." (Communist Manifesto).

As with Darwin and Wallace in the domain of natural history, so with Marx and Engels in the materialistic conception of history. Marx shows that with changed

economic conditions, come new social classes, new ideas, new interests. The subject class that has sought to possess tools or means of livelihood has always fought for political supremacy. Every class struggle must be a political struggle. The decline of the Roman Empire, the French Revolution, the vast changes within capitalism including the growing conscious discontent of the workers, can only be explained by Marx's theory.

The handicraft worker had a mentality different from the city proletariat of to-day, the conditions had not developed the Socialist who is a product of the modern slave system of social production: What then is the struggle that is paramount to the Socialist? It is the Class struggle, it is the struggle between the producers, and the non-producers who possess and control the means of life, between the wage workers and the Capitalists. To remove poverty and degradation the workers must wage that struggle consciously for the establishment of a higher order of society in which class distinctions will be abolished and all can enjoy the comfort and leisure modern means make possible. The decadent parasites of Capital will be no match for a majority organised for Socialism. It will indeed be "the survival of the fittest."

MAC.

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## Is the Socialist Attitude towards Religion Sound?

A Criticism by Mr. ARCHIE McARTHUR and our Reply.

Being on the Thames Embankment last May Day, I bought a copy of a pamphlet on "Socialism and Religion," issued by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. If my memory serves me right, I encountered this same pamphlet some fourteen years ago in Winnipeg. The manifesto, for such it is, bases upon materialism. I submit that it is a mistake for Socialists any longer to found their propaganda upon such a questionable doctrine. To do so is but to invite attack and inevitable discomfiture.

Fifty years ago—which was an age of triumphant Science—it was widely believed that in matter and motion there had at last been placed in man's hands the key to the interpretation of the universe and all its contents, including man himself. Fifty years ago that was; but time in the interval has wrought many changes. Science, now wiser and less confident, recognises its limitations and confines itself to a description of things as they appear to us, being silent about them as in their ultimate nature they are. Materialism is no longer regarded as a truth of science.

Neither is materialism an established truth of philosophy. It amounts to no more than a philosophic speculation; and it is endorsed to-day by few thinkers of repute. The main reason for this, briefly expressed, is that the theory cannot reach its starting-point. Thought itself bars the way. You can never get to a position beyond thought where you are face to face with matter *per se*—where you have matter pure and simple—and then show thought evolving from it. Matter in its primordial form—the atom with its electrons—is always matter with an element of thought already present in it. Anyone who grasps the significance of this statement will at once see how precarious a basis materialism is for Socialism.

Materialism is in truth a philosophic issue, which must be settled upon philosophic principles. No apparent value of it for propaganda can avail against a position established in opposition to it—finally, as I think, and irrevocably—far from "the tumult and the shouting," in the quiet and remote chambers of the thinkers.

Socialism—in essence the view that as production is now social, so also ought to

be distribution, and that this can be secured only through the collective ownership and control of industry with its materials and implements—Socialism is strictly an ethico-economic doctrine, which may be held on various grounds. It is that which constitutes its strength and makes it a possible world-polity. The Socialist world of the future—ininitely rich it will be in human types and their contributions to the common stock—is not to be for a handful of doctrinaires, but for all the world's inhabitants, whatever their opinions on matters irrelevant. The facts upon which the "materialist conception of history" founds, when not coloured and falsified beforehand by the "conception" itself, are susceptible of another and, as many think, a sounder and more inspiring interpretation; and there is no warrant for using it as a test of orthodoxy. To discard the theory would detract nothing from the achievement of Marx. His genius and industry it was that brought the facts to light and forced them upon the attention of the world.

I speak of the "materialist conception" not without some acquaintance with it. Eighteen years ago I came to grips with it when a student under Morris Hillquit, the well-known Marxian and Internationalist, at the Rand School, New York, in the first year of its existence. Hillquit, I remember, was careful to exclude the "materialist conception" from his definition of Socialism. Socialism would do well, like science, to learn its limitations and refrain from dogmatising about the ultimate nature of reality, whether it is material or spiritual.

Not as an enemy of the cause do I write, but as an old and deeply interested friend. I was one of the original members of the Independent Labour Party thirty-two years ago and, before that, was on the executive of the old Scottish Labour Party. Looking back over the past generation, I deeply regret the way in which Socialists have, unwarrantably and without profit to themselves, undermined morality and religion.

As to morality, there is the phrase "the morality of Socialism." But how much, on a materialistic basis, does this come to? It comes to no more than self-interest. That is why the healthy moral consciousness

revolts against it. Self-interest is not necessarily selfishness. Selfishness can exist only in one whose deeper nature it is not to be selfish. It is a quite legitimate element in the moral life. That the working-class itself has been so long blind to its own true self-interest has indeed been its bane. All the same, mere self-interest is not morality, and to proceed upon it would be no ethical advance upon capitalism.

The fatal objection thus to materialistic Socialism is, strange to say, that it is individualistic. It conceives of men as isolated units, each seeking ends that are purely his own, or at any rate ends that are only accidentally united with those of his fellows. Upon such a basis society would be impossible.

However imperfect society at present is, it expresses a principle qualitatively different from self-interest and incommensurably higher. That principle is the idea of the common good. The idea of the common good it is round which ethical controversy has moved throughout the ages—its nature and how it can be justified. It can be justified, as the greatest thinkers have taught and as I myself am profoundly convinced, only on the ground that there is in man a universal and non-material element which lifts him above a merely individual existence and makes him potentially one with his fellows and with the universe. It is, not a life of prudential calculation, but the ever richer and wider realisation of the common good thus conceived—our happy and ennobling privilege, our sacred duty even to the point of self-sacrifice—it is this that constitutes morality. And morality Socialists, by their alliance with materialism and its resulting determinism, have done much to weaken.

As to religion, I could say much, out of a full heart, of the damage done to it by Socialists, but space forbids. Theologically I belong myself to the extreme left, and when Socialists seek wisely to destroy the socially hurtful superstitions that still survive in outworn creeds, I am naturally with them. But religion itself—the apprehension with mind and heart of the Divine Perfection as He gradually unfolds Himself in the universe and in human life—that is another matter. It cannot be destroyed; it is eternal.

For myself I glory in religion. It is,

in this closing stage of my life, what it has been since first in far away years I got at my beloved mother's knee my earliest glimpse of its secret and acquaintance with its power—it is life's chief good.

#### REPLY TO MR. McARTHUR.

The pamphlet under consideration traces religion from its origin, in savage fear and inexperience, to its modern forms; bringing forward a multitude of facts and reliable authorities in support of the view set forth. Our opponent makes no attempt to touch this historical statement, so that it evidently stands as a correct record, as far as he is concerned. His criticism consists in the main of a series of unsupported assertions; these I will deal with as fully as space will allow. The pamphlet further points out the use to which religion has been put as an aid to the different ruling classes. This also our critic leaves severely alone.

He opens up with the assertion that materialism is an outworn philosophy which science has outgrown, and further on he says that materialism is endorsed by few thinkers of repute.

Let us hear what a "scientist" has to say in the matter:—

"This procedure has to be adopted not merely within the limits that are popularly assigned to the term science, but also in the realm of what is popularly termed philosophy. As a matter of fact there is no fundamental distinction between the two. Science is not the mere collection of facts. It has indeed to give a great part of its time to the ascertainment of facts, using all the resources of modern technique to secure accuracy in so doing; but the facts once ascertained are merely its raw material. Once they are obtained the real task of science begins—to find out exactly how the facts fit together in that wonderful edifice that we call the universe of nature. The working hypotheses of science are the provisional sketches of particular little bits of the edifice; in their final form and pieced together they would form the complete theory of nature."—Professor J. Graham Kerr, "Manchester Guardian Weekly," 29th February, 1924.

Here we have a scientist giving the opposite to our opponent's contention. But, this apart, how can science achieve anything except by materialistic methods, whether scientists are conscious of the fact or not? Science can only deal with *things*, whether those *things* be tables or thoughts, and *things* exist. If they exist, then that fact itself demonstrates their material nature. Would our opponent suggest that a thought consists of nothing? If so, then

let him get in touch with the woman who wears her brain out *thinking* how she can make ends meet. She will tell him that thinking is a tiring process in which much energy is used up and that *food* is required to replace this energy.

This brings me to his next assertion, that matter in its primordial form is always matter with an element of thought. (One is reminded of the mysterious attributes of capital!) He helps this assertion out by the previous contention that we can never get to a position beyond thought where we are face to face with matter pure and simple. And later he proves we cannot go beyond thought by doing so himself—and finding the "thing in itself"!

Does our opponent contend that "the atom with its electrons" thinks and consciously combines into stones and half bricks, and that during times of trouble these half bricks consciously fling themselves at our heads. If he does hold this view, then he rules out the cloud-pusher and divine scene-shifter. The brain is a combination of atoms and the brain thinks; feet are a like combination and they dance; snow is such a combination and it melts; trees are such a combination and they sprout; which is the more wonderful? and which is non-material?

It is the material nature of thinking that is apparently denied. Perhaps an illustration will make the position clearer.

If an object be held up to a mirror a reflection appears. This reflection and reflecting process is just as material as the object reflected. The brain is like such a mirror, obtaining its images through the senses, but it is a living one that sorts out, combines and stores up images. The correctness of the sense perceptions and thought process is demonstrated by future action. For instance, you walk round a moving motor-bus, not under it. The living activity of the brain is just as material a process as walking, or cycling, or thundering, and no more wonderful.

The primordial form of matter contains in the embryo the volcano, dancing girls, the whirlwind, trees, growth, smoking, and so forth, each of which material manifestation is every bit as wonderful as the "element of thought." Things only exist in their relation to each other. The brain learns of objects by their material manifestations, whether these manifestations take

on a physical or a mental form. If our opponent is only going to call touchable things material, then the sound of thunder must be included in his mystical world. We can't touch thunder, but we can hear it; we can't touch thoughts, but we can feel them. All phenomena have the same general nature; they exist and can be made the subject of scientific investigation. There is nothing mystical about thinking, briefly it is the faculty of deriving the general out of the particular, abstract conceptions out of concrete things—a material operation of the brain.

He next asserts that the facts of the materialist conception of history admit of another interpretation, but as he does not give any other interpretation, the statement is a waste of paper. Anyone who is not blinded by illusion must be able to see that all authoritative history is now written from the standpoint of the materialist concept. As epoch after epoch gets a more complete treatment so the economic roots of social development are made clearer and clearer. In the course of history, morality and religion are demonstrated to be changeable things. The moral and religious ideas prevailing at a given period are those favouring the maintenance of the method of production and distribution of that time. As production develops and new classes rise to supremacy the moral and religious ideas that hinder their development are discarded and new ones substituted. History, since the break-up of tribal communism, has been the record of the struggle of different classes for control of the productive forces and the wealth produced. These classes have arisen out of the economic soil and have pursued economic ends. As this point has been dealt with over and over again in these columns and as our opponent has deprived me of the opportunity of grappling with the alternative that he is keeping up his sleeve, there is no occasion to go further into the question at the moment.

The aim of the Socialist is to get all to work harmoniously together on a basis of equality, as only by doing so can each develop himself to the fullest degree and enjoy the best of life—"Man is a social animal." This idea is no non-material element, it is the heritage of the herd. Hence the assertion that "materialist Socialism" is "individualistic" is foolish and futile.

Our opponent is blind to the practical facts of life and has lost his way in the maze of metaphysics and thus, instead of seeing the principle of the individualistic pursuit of profit and the robbery of the wage worker that faces him at every turn, has discovered somewhere in the byways a vague abstraction, the "principle of the common good." In its essence he has again got hold of the wrong end of the stick—society should exist for the benefit of man and not man for the benefit of society.

Finally, in the oppression of one class by another, the control of the means of production by the few idlers and the enslavement and impoverishment of the many toilers, he sees "the Divine Perfection" gradually unfolding himself (he *knows* it is a "he"! ). This is a slavist view as it involves resignation and, in the light of previous remarks, a denial of the class struggle. Hence, if the workers would be free they must throw off these religious shackles, and struggle until their class conquers economic freedom in order that the groans of the hungry, the cries of the outcasts, and the whines of the religious, shall alike take their places in the annals of the past. I have refrained, as far as possible, from touching upon points and arguments that are already fully dealt with in the pamphlet that is the subject of attack.

GILMAC.

### LANSBURY'S WEEKLY.

The object of this publication is "to present news in such fashion as will make Socialists of our readers." Those who know Lansbury's career of manœuvre for place and position by the use of emotional muckraking, will not expect anything of a Socialist nature from that quarter. A perusal of this literary mixture will confirm expectations. Page 1 (20.6.25) is devoted to "Problems of Real Life," with solutions by one "Martha." It is difficult to describe its piffle:—"Here is a woman in love with her daughter's husband. What should I do?" she says. "Martha" advises some "real hard work" and the "atmosphere of a dozen howling babies." Mrs. A., who has "labour principles," six children and a policeman husband who is a "rank conservative," possibly as rank as the "labour

principles." "Martha" settles this problem with the true Lansbury flavour. "Mrs. A.," she says, is a "heroine," she ought to "live spiritually" and "resist not evil."

Much of the other rubbish, even its Labour items are the merest surface skimming, inferior to the ordinary Labour Magazine. The unemployed are advised to march out with banners to agitate "until work, honest, decent work, is found for those capable of working": not "all" capable, of course, only the workers. The Capitalists are asked to give them the whip hand by the removal of unemployment and thus abandon their privileged position in society.

But Lansbury knows better, he merely plays upon the Workers' weakness, their insane love of work. In columns of egotistical slobber he gives his experiences among parsons and high-brow labour women. He "felt a thrill of real joy that it has been my good fortune to be a soldier in our Socialist Army." What lying impudence from one whose party and himself have done more to besmirch and hinder the cause of Socialism than the Anti-Socialist Union. Of the crowds he addresses Lansbury writes: "I don't suppose any of these . . . could pass an examination in Marxian economics; they are ignorant of these and the 'Materialist Conception of History,' as are most of those who write and talk so glibly about these so-called eternal verities." We have supplied the evidence from time to time that without this ignorance Lansbury and his tribe could not command a following. Neither will Lansbury receive the patronage of his "rich friends" nor the Labour Party receive Capitalist financial support unless they endeavour to perpetuate such ignorance. In this journal are other items all equally puerile. "As God sees it," childish cartoons, quack adverts, and a rebel song. People who claim that this material will make Socialists are either liars or fools. Nevertheless it is what we expect from one who for years has flourished upon Working Class credulity with a mixture of sentimental slosh and political trickery.

MAC.

### ERRATA.

In the article on the "Romance of the Ages," in June issue, page 350, second column, the lines 10 and 11 should read: "Man won, and changed the law of inheritance from the female to the male."

### SPOOKS AGAIN.

The Chairman (name not given) of the recent Annual Conference at Colwyn Bay of the United Postal Workers' Union, is, we are pleased to observe, not too old to learn. Like ourselves he had noticed the patent emptiness of Mr. Baldwin's appeal for a truce in industry. Well, one need not be an intellectual giant to see that. How many times is it necessary to repeat, "all great minds think alike." The Chairman goes one better than that. He is a living exponent of the new truth, "all great men talk alike," for, by what can only be a coincidence his remarks read like a condensation of our April Article on "Mr. Baldwin's Utopia." Whole phrases read exactly the same, and in others, words almost appear to have been transposed or altered. It is remarkable. What a case for the Psychical Research Society. Here is an authentic case of thought-transference extending even to continuous strings of the same words. We are amazed. Of course had the Chairman been actually quoting from the Socialist Standard, he would have had the elementary decency to have said so: that goes without saying. We would not deny elementary decency to any member of the Labour Party. Too often it is their only possession. We would not rob them of their all. No! It is a clear case of psychic transference. We commend it to Lodge, Doyle, Bradley and Co. AMEN RA.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Our readers will readily appreciate the hard struggle an organisation like the S.P.G.B. has to raise the necessary funds to continue the publication of new pamphlets on Socialism. Since the object of the S.P.G.B. is the establishment of Socialism and *nothing less*, unlike other Political Parties—Capitalist and pseudo-labour—we are not likely to receive any assistance from benevolent or vote catching millionaires. No, we are dependent upon you—our members and sympathisers—the Working Class. Fresh literature, which will supply the Working Class with much needed Socialist education, is constantly needed, and the S.P.G.B. is trying to fill the bill though necessarily handicapped by lack of funds. However, in response to the great demand, we have just reprinted the second edition of

"Socialism and Religion" and this admirable pamphlet is now on sale (see advert. in another column). The MS. of another pamphlet, one that is long overdue, is now ready. The title will be "Socialism," and it is a comprehensive brochure of 48 pages, covering every phase of the Socialist position and is the official statement of the Party, of the case for Socialism. We are only held up for want of cash to pay for printing, and we address this appeal to all those who desire the propagation of Socialism to continue. It rests entirely with you whether or not we shall be able to publish this new pamphlet during the coming propaganda season and we urge all to put their shoulder to the wheel to make this possible. Send along your donation—no matter how small—to the Publications Fund Committee, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1.

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## The Socialist Standard,

AUGUST



1925

## THE SOCIALIST VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN CHINA.

The present disturbances in those parts of China occupied by foreign settlements may be said to have had their immediate origin in a strike which took place in February last. Chinese workers employed in Japanese textile factories in Shanghai protested against the ill-treatment of a girl who was seriously injured by a Japanese foreman. Her offence was that she was found asleep after a twelve-hour night shift. The strikers demanded that fines and personal violence of this kind be abolished, and a 10 per cent. increase of their wages. The strike appears to have been unsuccessful, but even so the employers failed to keep the terms of settlement.

In May this and many long-standing grievances led to a general strike movement in Shanghai, and feeling was quickly inflamed by the death of a striker at the hands of a Japanese factory official. On May 30th a number of Chinese students paraded in protest after having been forbidden to do so by the police. Some students were arrested and the remainder demanded their release. Shanghai police in the charge of a British inspector were then ordered by him to "shoot to kill" only 10 seconds after he had announced his

intention to the few bystanders who were near enough to hear his words. The result was that 6 were killed and 40 wounded. Within 6 days the victims in the ensuing riots numbered 70 dead and 300 wounded—all Chinese.

The movement rapidly spread to Hong Kong, Canton and other industrial and commercial centres, being added to and made more complex by the race hatred of British, French, Japanese and other foreigners who have at different times occupied Chinese territory and maintained their occupation by force, in spite of the opposition of Chinese governments. It has been easy enough to induce the strikers to believe that their enemy is the "foreigner," because the majority of the factories happen to be foreign owned. There is actually, of course, no question of the Chinese exploiter being any less brutal in his treatment of his employees than are his alien rivals. The abominable conditions which prevail in the foreign mills—as bad as those common in this country in the early days of the factory system—are equalled, if not surpassed, by those in Chinese establishments in and outside the foreign settlements.

The foreign settlers, backed by their respective governments, are thus threatened by two quite different but at present associated movements—by their Chinese employees, who want better conditions, and by the propertied and educated Chinese, who burn with hatred of the foreign invaders and demand independence. They resent their position of political and social inferiority and (most intolerable of all the burdens a would-be ruling class can be made to bear) they have had to suffer the indignity of seeing the proceeds of the exploitation of Chinese workers pocketed by European and Japanese capitalists. The first principle of patriotism in China, as elsewhere, is that robbery, like charity, should begin—and end—at home.

For their part the foreigners are by no means more than superficially united. Great Britain arrived early and obtained the best ports and most extensive spheres of interest, and now in consequence has to face the hardly disguised hostility of the late arrivals who seek to gain commercial and financial advantage by other means than those adopted by Great Britain. Thus Russia and U.S.A. both go out of their way to pose as friends of China. Russia has

already relinquished all special privileges in China, and America chooses this moment to announce that it foregoes the last instalments of the Boxer indemnity. American missionaries supported the policy of their Government by giving evidence on behalf of the arrested Chinese students, while British and others were defending and glorifying the brutality of the British controlled police.

As for the disturbances, we are familiar enough with the customary violent and hypocritical attitude of the European ruling classes towards their workers not to be surprised at the use of similar methods in Shanghai. All the blame was as a matter of course laid on the Chinese students and "agitators," but little by little evidence has accumulated which badly damages the pretensions of the guardians of "law and order."

In the demonstration the only casualties were Chinese; two out of three doctors stated at the trial that the wounds were nearly all *in the back*, which would be inexplicable if the crowd had been attacking the police; the third doctor said, "I am not sure whether the bullets were shot from the back or the front." (*Daily Herald*, July 21st.) The judges found "that there was no violence or indication of violence, that most of the arrests took place *before the shooting* . . ." The students were all acquitted. The Commission appointed by the diplomatic body blamed the police and recommended the dismissal of those responsible (*Daily Herald*, 22nd July). This finding has been overlooked or suppressed by most of the Press.

The recent movement is, however, only a symptom of a change which coming over China—the change from a static peasant system to an aggressive and progressive capitalism.

"China is passing through the first phases of the industrial revolution. . . . In the seven years from 1915 the number of spindles rose from one to two millions."—"Manchester Guardian," 19th June, 1925.

A propertyless industrial working class is massing and slowly learning to organise against vile factory conditions and low wages. Whether they will or no they are being brought into dependence on world capitalism, and they will in time take their part in the struggle for the overthrow of that system.

Unfortunately this critical phase finds them overwhelmed with interested parties offering them bad advice, anxious to divert them into various blind alleys.

The Chinese capitalists, the Communists and the Labour Party are all "friends" of the Chinese worker. If the Chinese workers are led to support the Chinese capitalist independence movement, experience will soon teach them that nationality means nothing whatever to the workers; their lot will be no degree better if and when their exploiters are all Chinese.

The Communists' willingness to deceive other people is only equalled by the ability to deceive themselves. They disregard the fact that at present only a small fraction of China is industrialised, they slur over the Capitalist aims of the independence movement and urge the workers to support anti-working class political groups to fight issues of no moment except to Chinese capitalists.

What they cannot or do not wish to see is plainly visible to others. The Chinese representative in London of the "Sin Po" (Batavia) writes as follows in "Foreign Affairs" (July, 1925): China, a land of conservatism and tradition, of peasant proprietorship, is the worst imaginable ground for the sowing of Marxian ideas. China being so vast, it is not surprising that in certain parts of the country the extreme Left wing of the Kuomintang is Communist; but the body of the organisation is bourgeois and capitalistic with the mediæval capitalism ("distributism") of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Let not Europeans be deceived by their newspapers: the present trouble in China, in so far as it is political, is a manifestation of nationalism in which merchants and bourgeois join with workers and students to resist foreign exploitation.

The British Labour Party and Trades Union Congress have passed resolutions of sympathy protesting their solidarity with the Chinese workers. How little their socialist understanding and how little the value of their sympathy is shown by the fact that on 25th May the General Council sent a deputation to the President of the Board of Trade.

"To protest against the continued employment of Chinese and cheap Asiatic labour on British steamers. The deputation asked the Government to introduce a Bill to make illegal such employment west of the Suez Canal."—"Daily Herald," 26th May.

The industrial workers in China are few at present. They should organise and work to defend their class interests on the economic field against capitalists irrespective of nationality, and prepare for the future when the conditions will have been prepared making working class emancipation possible through Socialism.

### THE PROBLEM OF PROBLEMS.

"Problems of the Labour Movement," by P. Braun, price 2d.—The Labour Monthly, 162, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.

Problems of the Labour Movement. What an imposing title for a booklet. And what an imposition upon the person who parts with his "tuppence" under the impression that he will learn something about the problems. For, throughout the 16 pages of this booklet, which includes a preface by Mr. A. J. Cook, of the Miners' Federation, the problems confronting the workers are not even stated.

To tell us that there are eleven hundred trade unions in England, and to lament the disorganised state of the workers, both nationally and internationally, is not very helpful.

Unity, Unity, Unity, is the keynote of Mr. Braun's attempt at outlining a policy for working-class action. But one is compelled to exclaim, Words, Words, Words.

John Stuart Mill once pointed out that he who proclaims himself a champion of Liberty generally gained the sympathy of his hearers before he commenced to argue a word of his case. And there is a good deal of truth in this, judging by a type of mind not altogether uncommon in the Labour movement. The words "Unity, Solidarity, Freedom," etc., among many "Labourist" and "Communist" ranters bring as much consolation as the blessed word "Mesopotamia" is supposed to have brought to the mind of a certain old lady.

All the talk in the world about "Unity" is so much clap-trap, unless it is clearly stated what the workers are to unite for. Even then, as our common experience shows, the plans outlined for unity, are more or less worthless. Not that Mr. Braun outlines any plan, he prefers to leave this as severely alone as the problems he set out to state.

Despite this adverse criticism of the

Labour Party, he tells us that "the trade unions must organise an influence on the policy of that party," and among other things, they are "to try to cleanse the Labour Party of lords, bankers, and merchants."

What a revolutionary proposal! Why does not Mr. Braun go the whole hog and advise the trade unions to write to John Bull about it?

As though the average trade unionist in his present state of political and economic ignorance of his class position could make any fundamental difference on the policy of the Labour Party. Whilst, as far as the lords, bankers, and merchants are concerned, cleanse the Labour Party of these people and that organisation remains what it has always been, a hindrance to working-class emancipation. Or, as Mr. Braun sees it, "a pathway towards rank and career," even though it be guided by those Mr. Braun styles as "the Left Elements."

Let Mr. Braun and all those who talk so glibly about "Unity" take note that, as the fundamental problem confronting the workers is how to get rid of their exploitation and poverty, the basis for the organisation of the workers, must be the ending of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism. But this means Socialist education, something more than opposition to the trickery of MacDonald, Thomas and Co. Given an intelligent working class, bent upon the removal of the real cause of their troubles, and Capitalism, let alone the MacDonald's, and the Thomas's, could not exist. The Socialist Party insists that the first step to unite the working class is to teach the workers that Socialism is their only real hope.

R. REYNOLDS.

**NOW ON SALE.**

## MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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FROM THE

S.P.G.B., 17 Mount Pleasant London W.C.1

### THE COMING OF SOCIALISM.

#### A CRITIC EXPOSED.

After the Socialist has demolished in argument the case for capitalism his opponent falls back on one stock defence. He asks for a description of Socialistic society, and when he is informed that all that can be said about it with certainty is that it will be a society in which the means of production and distribution will be communally owned, and democratically controlled, in which production will be for use and not for profit, he cries, "There you are. You've got nothing constructive to offer. Your policy is wholly destructive, and your remedies vague and nebulous." And that allegation comforts him and provides him with a justification for supporting capitalism which in argument he has had to admit cannot itself be justified. It is an old cry, but because it is being raised continuously it is worth while dealing with it. The latest person to give prominence to it is Mr. Ramsay Muir. As Editor of the "Weekly Westminster" he has published a supplement entitled "The Socialist Case Examined," in which he finishes up by flattening out the Socialist with ten questions, of which the first is, "How will the Socialist State be organised?" The other nine questions are equally terrifying, and show Mr. Muir's journalistic skill in dodging the point at issue. Really Mr. Muir is not our pigeon; he does not attack responsible Socialism but the pink Liberalism of the MacDonalds, the Guild Socialism of G. D. H. Cole and the I.L.P. We will, however, remove those ten feathers from his tail (ten feathers of which he must be very proud, for he flourishes them twice, although that may be merely a trick of the journalist) because we can thereby deal with two birds with one stone. In passing it might be mentioned that Mr. Muir shows a greater knowledge of Socialism than the I.L.P.'ers, etc., whom he attacks, and than he cares to admit. He points out, as we have never ceased to point out, that Socialism "does not mean a belief in using the power of the community for the purpose of protecting the weak, improving the condition of the poor and laying public burdens upon those who can best bear them," and that it is foolish to think that legislation such as the Insurance Acts are Socialistic. He lays his finger on another weak point in the I.L.P. creed, when he

points out that equal distribution of wealth, which the I.L.P., etc., seeks to bring about by inheritance taxes and capital levies, etc., would be useless at the present time, and is of only secondary importance. The main charge made by Socialists against Capitalism is that it fails to deliver the goods. The contradictions inherent in the system which is based on individual ownership and social productions prevent goods being produced in the quantities they might be. The system acts as a "fetter on production," and it is because of that that we condemn it.

The question of distribution is only of secondary importance as compared with that of removing those fetters on production. Capitalism maintains an army of unemployed at both ends of society, under it many workers are employed unproductively, it presents the spectacle of equipment standing idle while those who could use it starve, it reveals man putting checks on the bounty of nature and restricting the production of rubber, tea, etc. It should be apparent then, even to a Radical Liberal, that anything that removes these evils will increase the wealth of the community. As they are inherent in capitalism they can only be ended by abolishing the system. To tinker about with the spanner of Manchester will do nothing, some of the "knocking" may be silenced but the car will still refuse to go. It is a new car that is wanted, and it won't be found in the green Liberalism of the Wee Frees, or the delicate shell pink "Socialism" of the I.L.P. It can only be the product of the class conscious desire of the workers themselves.

It is not worth while dealing with the few weak defences Mr. Muir puts up for Capitalism, they are old and outworn, and should have been pensioned off long ago. But before proceeding to spoil his lovely tail we would like to pause to tender him our sympathy. He obviously found it very difficult to discover what the I.L.P. really stood for, to find some meaning in the contradictory statements of their various spokesmen. We appreciate his difficulty. We also have sought to discover what the I.L.P. stands for and have failed to do so. Of course we have always known what it did not stand for—Socialism. And now to reveal the Parson's Nose.

The first and most important question is

the first, "How will the Socialist State (!) be organised?" Strange as it may appear at first sight, no fuller answer can be given to this question than that indicated at the beginning of this article. Incidentally no fuller answer is necessary. If a defender of Capitalism were asked to say how the Capitalist system is organised all he could say if he were honest would be that the means of production and distribution are privately owned and that production is carried on by a propertyless class in exchange for wages under permission from the owning class who control production and draw profits from industry. That is the base on which the present superstructure is raised, but the buildings are many and various. Municipal tramways, monopolies like Coats, private family concerns like Hugo Stinnes & Co., vertical combinations like Harland and Wolff, horizontal combinations as in the German and French potash industries, public undertakings like the Post Office all differ from one another in detail, and yet are all capitalistic in that they are based on one thing—the existence of a propertyless wage earning class. If, therefore, it is impossible to say how industry is organised under Capitalism without writing a book, it is not surprising that more details cannot be given of industrial and social organisation under Socialism. Any attempt at prophesying is foolish, for the co-operative commonwealth would obviously be a very different thing if it came in 1925 from what it would be if it came in 2025. Its form will depend upon the stage reached in industrial development and technique when the revolution takes place. Moreover Socialism is not a matter of crystal gazing, Socialists are not prophets of the future but interpreters of past history. Socialism is a theory which claims to explain past history as a series of class struggles, and more than that it does not seek to do. And as Socialism will be brought about by the united efforts of the workers, it is impossible for any one Socialist, or any body of Socialists now existing, to interpret what exactly all the workers of the future will want, and it is not only the Socialist who admits his inability to foretell the details of the future. Mr. Stanley Baldwin recently dealt in the House of Commons with the evolution of industry within the present system, and even in those much narrower

limits he confessed that he could not prophesy.

I have just tried to put . . . my conviction that we are moving forward rapidly from an old state of industry into a newer, and the question is: What is that newer going to be? No man, of course, can say what form evolution is taking. ("Hansard," 6th March.)

Socialism will be prepared by the development of Capitalism and the form of its society will therefore be evolved in the womb of Capitalism. It is only "middle class" thinkers like the Webbs who are so impressed with their own intellects that they think that they can super-impose some organisation from without, and that the child of their imagination will be cheerfully adopted by the whole working class.

The third question raised is, "Can Socialism increase our national income?" and to that an answer has already been given. Then comes the gem of the collection. Mr. Muir wants to know if Socialism would cure unemployment. If he had considered what unemployment is, and if he had not found it advisable to change his ground in the course of the argument (so that although he starts off by accepting expropriation as an essential of Socialism, he finishes up by assuming that compensation would be paid to property owners) he would have refrained from this foolishness. Unemployment is inability to sell one's labour power, and therefore only exists as a concomitant of wage slavery. Socialism, by ending wage slavery, will therefore cure unemployment, and what is more important it is only Socialism that will cure it. In this is also contained a reply to the seventh question, "How would Socialism deal with Labour disputes?"

The question "How would Socialism affect our Foreign Trade?" is a queer one in the mouth of a Liberal. Mr. Muir fears for our safety if we have a revolution, as we depend for our foodstuffs on importation from abroad. Tariff Reformers have been pointing out this danger which exists under Capitalism, and clamouring for Imperial Preferences, etc., for two decades, and Mr. Muir has scoffed at them and waxed eloquent in and out of Parliament about "sinister self interest." Has Manchester's armoury so few weapons in it that it has to borrow Birmingham's blunderbuss?

The last four questions can be left, they do not touch the case for Socialism, but are

directed against the policies of the Labour Party and the I.L.P. The second question is equally beside the point. "How would Socialism raise the necessary capital?" asks Mr. Muir. If cards like these are the trumps in the Liberal hand then one is almost sorry for those who have to play the hand out. Capital—an instrument of exploitation, will cease with Capitalism. Under Socialism

provision will only have to be made for the supplying of the necessary equipment to carry on production, the providing of that equipment will be a charge on industry.

But all these are old cries, and it is amusing to find them in the mouth of a leader of "rejuvenated Liberalism." The surprising thing is that they continue to deceive the workers. W. J. R.

## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS. THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

(Continued from last month).

### IDEAS AND THE WAGES SYSTEM.

We have now seen how the bourgeoisie established a form of government peculiarly suited to their needs, based upon the "rights of property" and in which the propertied class ruled directly through chosen representatives under their control. The further developments of the bourgeois state, however, in which it tends more and more towards universal suffrage cannot be understood without considering a factor of the greatest significance—the mental outlook of the working class under the present system.

The modern proletariat is the counterpart of the chattel-slaves of Ancient Civilisation and the serfs of the Middle Ages. In economic function there is little or no distinction between these forms of exploitation. As economic relations, however, they have distinct differences which among other things determine the respective attitudes in the three systems, of the exploited class towards the social order that enslaves them. The slave's attitude may be generally summed up as "ineffective opposition," that of the serf as "passive acquiescence," whilst that of the modern wage-worker is the apparently extraordinary one of "active support."

It is often declared that this attitude of the mass of the workers under capitalism is the result of capitalist propaganda. The truth is, of course, that it results from the conditions of society as a whole—propaganda forms a part of these conditions, but its seed cannot take deep root and flourish, except it falls on fertile soil.

Let us contrast the historic modes of exploitation, paying especial attention to the peculiarities of the wages-system. The chattel-slave, the serf and the wage-worker

are all compelled to labour and to surrender all the wealth they produce, except on the average that required for their own maintenance at the customary standard of living. Here, however, the resemblance ends for the social machinery whereby the exploitation is effected differs in each case. The kind of pressure used is different—with chattel-slavery it is naked force, the fear of the lash or torture; with serfdom it consists largely of the overwhelming power of custom and tradition, whilst with wage-slavery it is "economic need"—the fear of starvation.

Under chattel-slavery and serfdom the workers were an openly subjected class having a definitely inferior legal "status." The chattel-slave had no legal rights, the serf had only those of the serf "status." Moreover, between the subjected and the dominant classes there were usually definite barriers of culture and often of race, language and religion. All these facts combined to make the class separation a fixed one and to prevent any interchange between the classes. The facts of slavery and exploitation were clear and undeniable. No slave or serf could make any mistake about it—if he did give way to the illusion that he was a free-man—he was promptly and painfully reminded of his true position.

The condition of the wage-slave is very different. His is not a *personal* servitude. He and his fellows are subjected as a class solely by being excluded from the essential instruments and materials of production. Between he and the capitalist there is no difference in legal status, no essential cultural distinction and none of race or religion. There is but one essential mark of distinction between the classes—the ownership of capital.

Now this talisman "capital" that divides exploiter from exploited has two important characteristics that make it unique as a class barrier and produce social and intellectual results that were impossible and inconceivable in previous slave systems. First, capital—the "giver of power"—is not a factor inherent in and inseparable from its possessor, but is something external and accessory to the individual that can be acquired, transmitted from person to person, and can be lost. Secondly, it is a quantitative thing. In practice it implies sufficient money to carry on profit making. Now, two sums of money can differ only in quantity. A quantitative change can, however, produce a qualitative difference, and the exploited wage-worker possessing a small sum of money has only to perform a multiplication sum to "see" himself a capitalist, and has only to make that imaginary increase a fact to become one in reality, and achieve the distinction of living without working by the exploitation of his erstwhile fellows.

By the very nature of the class-barrier under capitalism it is possible to surmount it—and in both directions. A member of the exploited class may become one of the exploiters and one of the leisured may be "dropped" into the ranks of the toilers. However exceptional in the nature of things such interchanges necessarily must be, they can happen, do happen, and may even occur overnight without the knowledge of the individual and from causes altogether outside his control.

Such economic relations by their very nature deny the ancient traditional belief, inseparable from the older systems, that classes are based upon inalienable class rights and distinctions and that social status is a divinely ordained thing and unalterable, whilst just as obviously they must tend to promote the view that all men have equal "natural rights," a dogma that to-day is almost universally accepted and is the basis of bourgeois political philosophy.

Furthermore, with the rise of capitalism and the extinction of the village and family as productive groups, the workers became isolated units individually contracting for employment. This and the further facts that under capitalism a person's welfare depends upon the amount of wealth he can acquire, and that workers as well as capitalist must engage in a competitive

struggle to obtain such wealth or increase it, necessarily breeds the attitude of "individualism"—"each for himself." Now when the idea of equal social rights merges with that of individualism the outcome inevitably is the raising to a moral ideal of "liberty"—liberty to "make the best of circumstances," to "get what one can," to do what one wills with one's own—limited only by the equal rights and liberty of other men. "The law of right social relationships" is "that—Every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man," says Spencer, the supreme theorist of bourgeois individualism, in his "Social Statics."

These ideas are, of course, precisely those of the revolutionary philosophers of the eighteenth century who attacked feudal rights and absolutism. What was new in the nineteenth century was that ideas of "equal rights" and "freedom" began to infect and take deep root in the heads of the workers and that they used them not to attack the dead-horse of feudalism, but against the legal and political inferiorities under which they laboured in the youthful capitalist state. Eventually they achieved the removal of these disabilities, and thus of the contradiction between the facts of the political system and the political ideas necessarily flowing from the relations of economic life.

#### THE WORKERS DEMAND THE FRANCHISE.

In the early years of the new factory-system—when the hand workers were dying out, when the machines were new and appeared as devilish instruments of death, when the workers, men, women and children, were forced from field and home into the new factories to grind out their lives for the new lords of industry—there was no shadow of pretence at equal rights for rich and poor. To the cultured "upper-classes" the restless, stirring workers were a dangerous mob, a horde of barbarians in the heart of a civilisation, a "swinish multitude," as Burke in an outspoken moment called them. The industrial masters candidly regarded and spoke of their labourers as beings inferior to themselves, fit only for a life of labour. In them the idea of "status" lived on in a caricatured form and, transferred now to the economic field, "directive genius" was its

alleged basis in place of ancestral prestige and "blue-blood."

The savage rebellion of the tortured workers again and again broke out in violent rebellion that filled the ruling class with the fear of general insurrection. This fear was intensified to panic by the "Jacobinism" of the French Revolution. Military were taken from the old garrison towns and distributed over the industrial areas. Pitt himself clearly stated, in the Commons, February 22nd, 1793: "The circumstances of the country, coupled with the general state of affairs, rendered it advisable to provide barracks in other parts of the kingdom. A spirit had appeared in some of the manufacturing towns which made it necessary that troops should be kept near them" (Hammond's "Town Labourer," p. 84).

Every political and legal device was used to suppress all signs of revolt amongst the "lower orders." "The Law, set in force by every kind of trickery, including the use of unscrupulous characters as spies, was administered with a brutality that stamped the working classes as a population amenable to no influence but that of terror" (p. 75). "The magistrates and their clerks recognised no limit to their power over the freedom and the movements of working men. The Vagrancy Laws seemed to supersede the entire charter of an Englishman's liberties. They were used to put into prison any man or woman of the working class who seemed to the magistrates an inconvenient or disturbing character. They offered the easiest and most expeditious way of proceeding against anyone who tried to collect money for the families of locked-out workmen or to disseminate literature that the magistrates thought undesirable." "A parson magistrate wrote to the Home Office in 1817 to say that he had seized two men who were distributing Cobbett's pamphlets and had them well flogged at the whipping-post under the Vagrancy Laws" (p. 72, "Town Labourer").

R. W. HOUSLEY.

(To be continued.)

#### NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

#### ASKED AND ANSWERED.

J. G. (Belfast) asks five questions on our policy. We give question and answer below:

1. Q. What is meant by political action?—A. Political action is that action taken to use or control the institutions of government, local and national.

2. Q. Is Parliamentary action a phase of political action?—A. Parliament is the central institution of national government, and action taken to use or control Parliament is therefore political action.

3. Q. Is the ballot the Marxian method of capturing the political state?—A. As the central machine of the political state is Parliament and the ballot gives the workers an opportunity of electing a majority, the use of the ballot by a Socialist working class is the means under present conditions for the capture of the State. This policy is based on Marx's teachings and is in harmony with the necessities of the situation.

4. Q. Do we advocate political organisation to the exclusion of industrial organisation?—A. No; our party manifesto points out that economic organisation is necessary under capitalism.

5. Q. Trade unions not being class conscious at present, would our party assist them in their struggles against the masters?—A. Yes. When they act for the workers' welfare Socialists support their actions, but point out the limits of all trade union action. The function of Socialists being to make Socialists and assist to establish Socialism, the Socialist Party therefore points the lesson to all trade unionists that only Socialism can secure to the producer real and permanent improvement in his conditions. The work of a Socialist Party is to teach Socialism and organise those who agree with it.

ED. COMM.

#### S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

##### LONDON DISTRICT.

**Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.

**Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.

**Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spicel-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A.L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W.19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Broad Lane, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## HARD COAL AND SOFT SOAP.

According to Professor Harebrain, the cause of the trouble in the mining industry is a very simple one. The miners eat too much, far too much. If they would only cut their animal needs down to, say, two meals a day, later to be reduced to one or less, their industry would flourish as of yore. Consequently, as their meals decreased, the need for wages would diminish, and when they had learned to dispense with meals altogether, wages could be brought down nearly to zero. Clothing they have already reduced to the minimum, and as for shelter, well, the roof of the mine is usually sufficient. An example so infectious could not fail to impress the railwaymen, who bring the coal from the pithead to the consumer. Working above ground, they would, doubtless, feel the need for more clothing than the miner, but even now, their benevolent employers insist upon supplying their needs in this direction. With only shelter to concern them, their wages would not be so near absolute zero as the miners, but obviously the room for an economic wage would be enormous. Then, look at the tremendous re-percussion of these conditions on the rest of industry, and on the world. With coal at fivepence halfpenny a ton and rail carriage about the same, we could undersell and bankrupt the whole of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia and Bardsey Island. Doubtless, this would injure our foreign trade, but, as the Professor says, "damn foreign trade, anyway." Food we should have dispensed with: clothing would become unnecessary; for with coal so ridiculously cheap, we would have huge fires all the year round. As for shelter—well, in the last analysis, all the population could enter the coal mines and so render even that superfluous. The eminent Professor realised that at this point the question arises

—with the whole population safely stowed in the mines, why produce coal at all? Exactly! Well, possibly the last man in will take a few dynamite cartridges in his pocket, and having cut the cage rope will set alight to himself and so solve the problem for all time.

It is easy to see that Professor Harebrain is a bit muddled. It should be just as easy to see that all the other well-meaning people who are just now tendering advice as to how the mining industry should be run are equally muddled. Some say that if the mines were grouped into areas all would be well. Others that only nationalisation will save the situation. Some suggest that the erection of super-power stations at the pithead will bring prosperity; others, again, the hydrogenation of coal into oil.

We will be paradoxical; we will take a wider, and, at the same time, a narrower view. The bulk of this nation is composed of workers. The nation has no existence apart from them. We therefore take their view. Nothing can be wider than that. It, therefore, narrows the issue down to the question of their interests alone, for whoever is not a worker is living at their expense. The mining industry, like all industries under capitalism, contains two living elements: a vast number of workers and a small number of owners. The workers, not yet having adopted Prof. Harebrain's advice, are periodically hungry, cold, and in need of shelter. They are, as a class, destitute of all save the capacity for work. Bone, brain and brawn are all they possess. They are reservoirs of energy; an energy singularly valuable, for it has the magical quality of giving more than it gets. It can convert the worthless into the valuable. It can take coal, for instance, from the recesses of the earth's crust, where it has lain

for untold millions of years, and convert it into a desirable and useful article. Left where Nature placed it, it is worthless, one with the dried mud which encloses it. Operated upon by human bone and sinew, it becomes a thing of value. Looked at with a microscope, the coal at the pithead differs in no respect from the coal in the seam. But it is different, nevertheless. It contains something it did not possess before. It is human labour. Invisibly crystallised in every shining lump is the blood and sweat of the miner. Daily the miner enters the pit, fresh and vigorous, and daily he returns (if he has not been unlucky) tired and jaded. But his energy has not vanished into thin air. It is embodied in the coal. It can be measured. It is measured. This process is realised when the coal is confronted with an equivalent on the market. A thousand tons of coal may be worth a country estate, or a steam yacht. They are, therefore, exchanged, and the owner of 1,000 tons of coal becomes the owner of a house or yacht. If he were of a confiding, candid nature, he would call his workers together one afternoon and address them thusly: "Brave lads! You have worked hard and well. The day before yesterday, 1,000 tons of coal reposed in Stygian blackness in my mine. According to my son, late of Balliol, it had lain where you found it two hundred million years. He may be a few years out, but that need not detain us. Suffice it to say that you have got it out to the light of day for me, and as I had no possible use for such a quantity, I have exchanged it for a steam yacht. In this I propose to visit the Mediterranean during the ensuing winter, and you, my faithful friends can carry on with the good work. You have had an exhausting time, but, after all, you are used to it, and someone has to do it, anyway. My private opinion is that you like it, for look at the years you have been doing it. Before you so kindly presented me with my thousand tons, you had been doing similarly with other owners in the neighbourhood. They tell me that your patience is exemplary, but that, like a docile horse, there are moments when even you jib. But also like the domestic animal, you never get rid of your driver. This seems to me one of your most excellent characteristics. The newspapers call it your inherent good sense. Without doubt, it is a most excellent arrangement, and so long as you are prepared to do the working, I

shall be happy to go on owning. (Interruption.) What's that? Where do you come in? I am glad you asked that question. I clearly recognise that, after all, you are human beings; you get hungry, cold and exposed to our inclement weather. I can see that your energy is in constant need of replenishment; that if you do not get the minimum of animal needs you will die. And as I could not extract 1,000 tons of coal from the earth myself, I should be hard put to it to escape a like fate, and might even be reduced to the necessity of working myself. This, or rather these catastrophes can be avoided, and, as a reasonable man, I propose to allow each of you a sum that will enable you to support life and renew the energy of which you are so prodigal. Obviously, I cannot do this unless you first make it for me (unless I borrow it), so that you will see the necessity for hard work (on your part) and huge output. True, in spite of all our efforts, I may not be able to sell the coal you have dragged up for me, and you may have to suffer great privation for having produced more wealth than is needed, but this is a state of things unfortunate but inevitable. My brother, who owns a newspaper, has repeatedly explained this regrettable feature of our system to you, and I am sure, having read it so often, you must agree with him that unemployment is a deplorable but necessary and inevitable evil, past the wit of man to remedy. I remember we talked over it quite a lot whilst we were wintering in Egypt last season. Rest assured that if the problem has not been solved, it is not from want of thought. If you only knew the amount of thought devoted to this problem alone on the Riviera, at the Casino, the Côte d'Azur, Aix les Bains, the Tyrol, Switzerland and numbers of other educational centres, you would be astonished. The principal adviser you must shun is the Socialist. He will tell you that I am unnecessary and useless; that, even if I were to stop in the Mediterranean, or drop in the Mediterranean, you could still get along without me. He will tell you that as the mines are vital to the people, the people should own them. He will contend that what is for the common good should be communally owned and worked for the benefit of all. He will ask you to vote your representatives into Parliament, in order to take my mine away from me, the railways and factories from their owners, the land

from its owners, and so on. What fustian! Does he realise that he will abolish the rich; that I and several hundreds like me will be reduced to the necessity of working like everyone else? What crazy stuff! Why everyone knows that it is the rich that supply the poor with work. And hard work is beneficial—at least for the great majority of people. So set to, my lads. Scientists say there is enough coal to last us two hundred years yet, so wire in and win it. Drop this talk of ending the present system, abolishing poverty, overwork and unemployment. Drop this short hours and high wages stunt and concentrate on hard work. There is nothing like it. When, in the Spring, I return from my voyage, I want to see every man-jack of you working like Trojans, and stacks and stacks of coal selling like hot cakes. I shall then get the deer forest I have been after, and you—well, you will be getting your wages, won't you. Good-bye, my lads! To it with a will. Good-bye!" (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

W. T. H.

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### NOTE.

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## THE ANTI-FASCISTS AGAIN.

The National Union for Combating Fascism has at last replied to the criticisms of them which appeared in the April *Standard*. Their reply is dealt with below. Before they sent their reply, the N.U.C.F. forwarded part of an article taken from the July issue of their paper, the *Clear Light*, and asked us to print it. As it did not mention us and contained no reference whatever to our criticism we naturally assumed that it had been sent in error. We wrote pointing this out and asked for their reply to our "April" article. It arrived too late for our August issue.

Mr. Holdsworth's letter is given in full:—

Comrades,—In your last issue you charged the National Union for Combating Fascism with being an anti-working class organisation. I could only conclude that you knew nothing about the N.U.C.F., so I forwarded a statement outlining the outlook and aims of the organisation. Your reply took the form of a sarcastic rejoinder through the post, thus proving to me that I had little to expect from the "precarious indulgence of that abstraction you call Ed. Com." I am prompted to go further into the matter only by the fact that the British Fascists have seized on your charge and are now using yourselves wherewith to check our attacks on them—a splendid commentary on the N.U.C.F. slogan that sectional bickering, faced with organised counter-revolution, is fiddling whilst Freedom burns.

But you say that you have produced evidence that the N.U.C.F. is certainly an anti-working class organisation. I want your readers to note the nature of the evidence itself. I give it as quoted and misquoted by yourselves.

1. That we reject the British Communists, but accept their anti-Marxist theory that capitalism will in some mysterious way collapse. (A misrepresentation of our position.)
2. That an individual writer in *The Clear Light* has spoken of the need to organise the workers to overthrow the capitalist system. (He has as much right to express his opinion thus as Bax has to say that no man can tell how Socialism will come.)
3. That we have said there are hundreds of thousands of revolutionary so-

cialists in Great Britain. (Jack London put the figure at 100,000 as far back as 1905.)

4. That the editors are apparently not of the working class. (Compare Marx and Engels. One editor and a wage slave.)
5. That we advocate the simple, clean, direct, open fight, without hesitation and without compromise. (We most certainly do—and what a crime against the working class.)
6. That we call on all Socialists to unite. (Don't you?)
7. That we provide a rallying-point for the progressives of all shades of Labour, Communist and Anarchist opinion. (And have been successful, so far.)

On these points you have arraigned us as enemies of the working class. Let your readers judge—or tell them, straight out, that the way of the S.P.G.B. is the one and only way, and that the N.L.P., the I.L.P., the S.D.F., the C.P., the A.P.C.F., the S.L.P., the N.U.C.F., the C.L.C., and the anarchist groups are, the lot of them, enemies of the working class. You might also explain to them how Marxians arrive at the conclusion that organised counter-revolution is a "red-herring" unworthy of consideration. (I make bold to say that, within two years' time, unless the Labour Movement takes a hand in checking it, that herring will be a whale, and a black one at that.)

I now challenge your own position, and meet me, if you can, without knocking the bottom out of your own vituperative malice against an organisation, all workers and all of them members of some one of the organisations above-mentioned, seeking to awaken the Movement to the fact that counter-revolution is in the saddle.

The present formation of the N.U.C.F. began as the old S.D.F. began—that school of scientific Socialists—it began, as Bax puts it, "an executive without a tail." Are we to be dubbed "anti-working class" on that account? Then dub the old S.D.F. likewise—the forerunner of yourselves.

We apply principles to tendencies. Marx did likewise. But we are not fossilised Marxians. We are not a select circle of intellectuals mouthing a bunch of formulae whilst counter-revolution organises itself. If we were, then you could, with some jus-

tification, call us enemies of the working class.

Now let me enlighten you a little further. The N.U.C.F. was not formed or initiated by those at present active in it, but by some other, Socialists likewise, who, finding it uphill work, dumped their burden on ourselves. But we carried on. And we shall carry on. And as soon as ever it is possible, a conference will be held, and we, personally, shall be relieved of the suspicion cast on us by such as yourselves, which, after all, was cast on no man more foully than on Karl Marx.

Faternally,  
ALFRED HOLDSWORTH,  
Editor, *The Clear Light*.

#### OUR REPLY.

For convenience we will use numbered paragraphs as above.

1. We can only repeat what we wrote in April. On page 1 of the February *Clear Light* we are told that "The day is dawning when the onus of choice will be flung upon the masses . . .", but on page 2 we find that the workers "must be prepared . . . to overthrow the existing order." No one explains why the workers need organise to overthrow something which is going to collapse from its own weakness, which is sinking "by its own weight."

2. A journal or a party which has one official policy but allows individuals to remain members while expressing their belief that that policy is unsound, is confusing the minds of the workers. One policy or the other must be wrong. It is, of course, necessary for the workers to organise to overthrow capitalism, but this is inconsistent with the N.U.C.F. Communist belief that capitalism will "collapse" through its own weakness. What on earth Mr. Bax has to do with us or with the point at issue, Mr. Holdsworth unfortunately does not explain.

3. The N.U.C.F. claims (without offering a shadow of evidence) that there are "hundreds of thousands of revolutionary Socialists" in Great Britain. Asked for proof, they can only protest that Jack London in 1905 suffered from the same vice as themselves of mistaking hopes for facts. Jack London may have had some excuse in 1905, and was probably mislead through accepting the idle chatter of the Mr. Holdsworths of those days. We repeat that the assertion is idiotic, and again ask Mr.

Holdsworth if he will turn a Clear Light upon the mysterious failure of these hundreds of thousands (if they exist) to organise into a Socialist Party, and if he will explain why they refrain from expressing their views at the ballot box.

4. Marx and Engels did not talk as does the N.U.C.F. about the necessity for "us" to "prepare the masses, the poor victims of the old order" as if "the masses" were to be mere cannon fodder in the hands of "us" generals of the Revolutionary Army. On the contrary, they recognised that emancipation must be the work of the workers themselves.

5. A simple, direct open fight is just what the N.U.C.F. does not and could not wage. Not to do so is a crime against the working class. We charge them with that crime. Rallying "the progressives of all shades of Labour, Socialist, Communist and Anarchist opinion . . ." precludes the possibility of carrying on a "simple, direct" fight for or against anything whatever. The idea of such a weird collection of persons fighting for Socialism is ludicrous.

6. Mr. Holdsworth now talks about calling on "all Socialists to unite." In April we criticised Aim number 1 as printed in their February issue. It read as follows:—"To provide a rallying point for the progressives of all shades of Labour, Socialist, Communist and Anarchist opinion . . ." This we said was nonsense. In the next issue of *The Clear Light* (April-May) and in subsequent issues the words "Labour," "Communist," and "Anarchist" are omitted. Was this because Mr. Holdsworth had to recognise that our criticism was justified and that this aim was indefensible? But even now the N.U.C.F.'s actions belie their claim. We call on Socialists to unite and fight for Socialism. The N.U.C.F. calls on Socialists to join with various kinds of anti-Socialists in supporting the Labour Party and other definitely anti-Socialist bodies.

7. If the N.U.C.F. has been successful in rallying Communists, Anarchists, etc., why did it alter its aim to exclude them?

Mr. Holdsworth, somewhat late in the day, challenges us to tell the workers "straight out that the way of the S.P.G.B. is the one and only way," and that a long list of organisations are "the lot of them enemies of the working class." If he had ever troubled to read our literature or even one issue of the *Socialist Standard*, he

would know that this is just what we do and have always done. Never by word or deed have we supported the Labour Party or any other political party. We advocate our policy because we believe it to be the correct policy for the workers of Great Britain. We do not, like Mr. Holdsworth, belong to one organisation because we believe its policy to be wrong, and that half-a-dozen other contrary policies are just as good (or bad). We do not mislead by pretending that the question of aims and methods does not matter.

To note one incident only, we observe that not one of the political parties he mentions took up a Socialist attitude to the war in 1914. Those who supported that war were "enemies of the working class." Let Mr. Holdsworth dispute it if he can.

We do not say that "organised counter-revolution" is an impossibility. We recognised the possibility 20 years ago. What we do say is that our way is the best method of dealing with it. We are, however, not given to working out plans for the future based on the remote possibility of "red herrings" turning into "black whales."

We meet Mr. Holdsworth's challenge by asking how the N.U.C.F. can be other than anti-working class since it gives support to and allows members to belong to the political bodies he mentions?

We do, and, since our formation, always have, dubbed the S.D.F. anti-working class. Did it not support the war, and does it not still advocate the reform of the capitalist system? We want the abolition of that system.

We broke away from the S.D.F. because we thought them wrong, not because we thought them right.

It is interesting to note that the N.U.C.F. has never had a conference, and presumably, therefore, has no kind of democratic control by the members. (By the way, who authorised the alteration in the aims?) Mr. Holdsworth has still not told us that the N.U.C.F. is willing to open all its meetings freely to the public. If it were democratic, "simple and direct," etc., it would have nothing to hide from us or from the Fascists, and could then not complain that the latter were using our statements against the N.U.C.F.

Undemocratic and secret societies are dangerous only to the working class.—Ed. Com.

## THE MEN OF SCIENCE AND THEIR "RELIGION."

The subject of the history of the conflict between science and religion, is one which provides its students with an interest from more than one point of view. Not only does it reveal how, with the advance of scientific knowledge, religion has been compelled to either abandon or modify its teachings, it also shows how accommodating some scientists can be when dealing with religion.

That the positive outcome of science spells death to religion is a fact which some scientists either attempt to conceal or avoid in their own peculiar way. Like certain of the leading lights of the Church, who pretend that the findings of modern science can be harmonised with religion, some "scientists" are not averse to trying to reconcile the irreconcilable.

Readers of Herbert Spencer will recall his celebrated attempt in this direction, as given in the first part of his work, "First Principles." In that work, Spencer speaks of all things, including the universe, as having proceeded from "an infinite and Eternal Energy." But, said Spencer, about this "Infinite and Eternal Energy" we neither know nor can know anything; it being "an inscrutable mystery."

This "Unknowable," Spencer declared, belongs to the sphere of religion, whilst all that is known or is knowable belongs to the domain of science. Therefore, to follow Spencer, since religion and science are totally independent of each other, the one concerned with "The Unknowable," the other with the knowable, both should keep within their own province and be "reconciled." In reality, this was Spencer's way of performing a feat of mental gymnastics. For surely there could be no stranger reconciliation. Religion is made to give up to science all that is knowable, and to rest contented with absolutely nothing to live upon. The humour of the position is delightful, although, apparently, the humour was not intended by Spencer. His so-called reconciliation reminds one of the man who agreed to being with his mother-in-law on condition that she committed suicide.

However, there was little need for surprise when it was learned that Spencer himself found it necessary to state in his

"Autobiography" that he regarded his work on "The Unknowable" as being "relatively unimportant." In fact, he agreed that it had no direct bearing on his general scientific works. Nevertheless, "The Unknowable" has comforted many poor souls who must have an abstraction of some kind to worship.

The fatal mistake made by Spencer rested on his treating religion and science as though they are absolutely exclusive subjects. And the same thing is done by certain of the present day scientists. But while this position may be a very convenient one to those who desire to avoid an "awkward" situation, it is none the less unscientific and absurd. For, fundamentally, religion and science are not as the poles apart in the sense laid down by Spencer. Both are concerned with explaining the world around us. Religion claims to explain the universe in terms of the supernatural, everything, to the religionist, even when he claims to accept the doctrine of evolution, is the outcome of "God Almighty." Science, on the other hand, explains everything, as far as actual knowledge goes, along lines of natural causation, and finds no need for the "hypothesis of God" to explain anything. Thus, since religion and science are seen to be fundamentally opposed in their explanations of natural phenomena, the conflict between them is inevitable and irreparable. Nevertheless, not all scientists are prepared to indicate the logical outcome of their own work in the field of science; some prefer to pander to the prejudices of the religionists. To give a case in point: In connection with the recent trial in America, where a teacher was charged with "breaking the law" by teaching evolution, Professor J. Arthur Thomson contributed an article to the *Daily News* on "Evolution and the Bible."

In that article Professor Thomson quite easily disposed of those people who rely upon Bible teachings to refute the principle of evolution. He reminded his readers that the evolution doctrine is the only scientific account yet advanced to show how living things came to be as they are. He also pointed out that, while there is unanimity among scientists regarding the fact of evo-

lution, there is a considerable difference of opinion among them regarding the "factors of evolution." Further, the Professor well describes the doctrine of evolution as "a piece of naturalistic historical description." But, as the old saying goes, after the Lord Mayor's Show comes the dust cart—instead of showing how all this conflicted with religion, the Professor attempted to "square the circle" in the following manner:—

It should be noted, however, that the fundamentalist reaction and obscurantism may be partly due to a lack of carefulness in the scientific presentation of evolutionism. Thus the evolution theory has often been presented as if it necessarily implied an acceptance of a mechanistic or materialistic philosophy; and man's affiliation with mammals has often been stated in a manner so crude that it has obscured his apartness. There is no reason in the world, as far as we know, why a sound evolutionist should not have a religious philosophy. Rather there is, we think, every reason in the world for being both evolutionist and religious.—*Daily News*, July 14th, 1925.

Now, it would have proved interesting had the Professor explained what he meant by "a materialistic philosophy," and how an evolutionist could embrace religion. As they stand, these statements may mean anything and everything but the right thing. Anyhow, there is good ground for believing that Professor Thomson has a special reason for slighting materialism. Materialists have long been the butt of misrepresentation and abuse. As Engels once said of certain of the opponents of materialism, they represent it to mean "gluttony, drunkenness, carnal lust, and fraudulent speculation." In fact, materialism has been charged with every conceivable vice. Hence the desire of certain "scientists" to repudiate materialism. Nevertheless, the fact is that the doctrine of evolution and science in general, does logically imply a materialistic philosophy, Professor Thomson and other scientists notwithstanding. For that philosophy is simply a view of nature founded upon the facts established by modern science. As Professor Sir Ray Lankester says:—

The history of scientific discoveries is a history of materialistic successes: for no scientific discovery has ever been made that is not based upon materialism and mechanism.

Some scientists may disown materialism, but, as another writer has observed, "it lies at the basis of all their efforts." No matter in which department of science a scientist may be engaged, whether as Astronomer, Geologist, Biologist or Socio-

logist, his business consists of ascertaining positive knowledge of nature's workings. And one of the outstanding facts of modern science is, that there is no break or gap in the continuity of natural phenomena. Where gaps exist, the scientist explains that they are only in our knowledge, and not in the "framework of things." An isolated happening in nature is a myth, for cause and effect is seen to be the rule operating throughout. From this it follows then that the idea of supernatural interference is a figment of the imagination. Science has rendered "God" not only unemployed, but unemployable, without even the power to draw the "dole."

When Professor Thomson tells us that an evolutionist may have a religion, we are prompted to suspect that he associates a meaning with religion which it will not logically bear. Nowadays religion has come to mean all sorts of things, and thus we hear of "the religion of ethics," "the religion of humanity," and even "the religion of Socialism." But this is all so much a matter of confusing the issue. Historically, religion has meant the belief in and worship of supernatural beings, and this is its essential meaning to-day; it cannot be separated from the god idea. As Engels has said: "If religion can exist without God, then alchemy can exist without its philosopher's stone."

Scientific investigation has revealed that religion first took form in primitive times through the ignorance of primitive men concerning the world around them. Fear and ignorance gave primitive man his gods, and Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is really no more than the gods of the savage transformed under the pressure of a continuous social development. Thus, "religious philosophy," to use Professor Thomson's phrase, necessarily implies a belief in this "God" and implies the acceptance of the story of creation.

The evolutionist who can harmonise the myth of "Divine creation" with the principle of evolution may be regarded as sincere, but only at the expense of his sanity. If the Professor, in his capacity of biologist, attempted to explain the differences between man and the anthropoids by saying, "God created them," he knows he would be ridiculed by his brother biologists. And well deserved such ridicule would be.

R. REYNOLDS.

## OFFICIAL NOTICE.

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable.

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## The Socialist Standard,

SEPT.,



1925

## THE BLACKNESS OF "RED" FRIDAY.

The Miners' Leaders and the Labour Press have hailed the outcome of the mining dispute as a tremendous victory for the Miners.

The *Daily Herald*, in large letters, blazoned it forth as "the greatest victory in Labour's history." Mr. Cook described it as "a great victory" and Mr. Purcell added that it was the greatest victory for trade unions in 25 years.

Black Friday compensated for by "Red" Friday is the style of jubilation quite common in "labour" papers.

When we seek the nature of the victory we find that it is a victory for the mine-owners.

The Government have agreed to secure the profits of the mine-owners by subsidising them to the tune of 20 odd millions. The miners are to continue working at the old rate of wages for nine months pending reports of a Committee of Enquiry appointed by the Government.

Mr. Cook's colleagues in the minority movement announced during the dispute that "The miners' officials have promised to fight for the 1914 standard of wages plus cost of living increases. They must be kept to that promise and the whole Trade Union

movement must support them." (*The Worker*, Aug. 1.)

The "Great Victory," however, means that the miners are to work at a wage 10 or 15 per cent. below that of 1914 and under conditions where there are 300,000 miners workless depending on insurance benefits or poor law doles when they can get them.

This happens in an industry where Mr. Cook admits the owners have made admitted profits of over 58 millions since 1921. So what the miners have won are wages (*when they can get a job*) far less than the 1914 level of poverty.

The long-continued demand of the miners for higher wages was swept upon one side by the owners insisting upon a reduction and the result of all the negotiations is that the miners will get no increase for at least nine months. The employers will get the profits they asked for. An inquiry will be held by "reliable gentlemen" and their report will be binding upon nobody. In the meantime the coal will be accumulated by mine-owners who can afford to wait till it is disposed of. During the nine months the Governing Class can make all preparations to deal forcibly with a strike on a large scale.

What can the miners prepare! At the very best they can arrange to entirely stop work and face the almost empty exchequer of the Union. Strike pay would last a very short time for in these days of reduced wages and unemployment the unions' funds are heavily depleted. Faced by want and menaced by force the miners' outlook will be a black one.

Even with practically an industrial union like the Miners' Federation and threatened by few blacklegs, their ability to cope with the worsening effect of capitalism has been nil. With all the experience of years of struggle the Miners' Leaders understand little of the situation they are in and so they are unable to advance the only remedy.

How little they appreciate the class struggle is shown by the speech of the President of the Miners' Federation at the Scarboro' Conference. The *Sunday Worker* (July 19) gives the following report:—

Mr. Herbert Smith, who presided, in his opening remarks, declared that *the present crisis in the industry was largely due to the fact that the mine-owners had not attempted to take the miners into their confidence.*

Whether or not the country believed in nationalization, he said, it would be driven to adopt that as the only way to save the mining industry.

He hoped the owners' attempt to lower wages and lengthen hours would be opposed by the whole trade union movement.

Continuing, Mr. Smith said that more than one in every four of the miners were unemployed, and two out of every three were earning less than £2 a week (*italics ours*).

The idea that the conflict between owners and workers is caused by the workers not being taken into confidence by the owners is a stupid one. What are the mine-owners to confide to the workers? This is the old idea of conciliation between robbers and robbed and those who preach it are blind to the facts of economic life.

Mr. Smith's foolish notion of nationalisation "as the only way to save the mining industry" is another idea that is injurious to the workers' welfare and its advocacy by the leaders, including Mr. Cook, and supported by the Communists, shows how little they have learned of the system.

The demand the miners' leaders make that the mines be re-organised and made more efficient is one that all capitalists can support.

All the demands the miners can make upon the system will leave their position fundamentally the same. The shortening of hours, upon which they banked so much, has been accomplished, the 12-hour day has become 7, and there are infinitely more miners unemployed than ever before. Their past victories and the mining legislation have left them with wages that mean hopeless poverty and a greater struggle to make both ends meet than in the past.

The very efficiency of re-organisation of the mining industry will mean that fewer miners are required to get the same quantity of coal. Therefore, more unemployment.

Nationalisation will be a boon to owners of many mines, but to the workers it will mean a stabilising of their poverty with no greater chance for work than now. Actually, less workers will be required, because the wasteful methods under competition that labour leaders criticise will be abolished and with their abolition the men who do this wasteful work will be eliminated.

Examine these schemes and plans of the Miners' Leaders! Do they touch these causes of the miners' present position? The stronger position of the owners due to combination of firms and rings; the development of substitutes for coal reducing the number of miners required; the markets abroad absorbing reparation coal under the

Versailles and Dawes schemes, supported or arranged by Labour Leaders; and, above all these, the fundamental cause, the dependence of the miner upon the owners for permission to work with the resulting robbery of the worker.

Trade Unions, financially bankrupt, are faced to-day by the wealthy owners, made wealthier by the enormous surplus wrung from labour in the years of "good trade." The miners, like other workers, may "gain" some sudden concession in a competitive system by striking when there is a danger of losing trade to competitors. But in the long run the fact remains, as Marx put it 60 years ago in *Value, Price and Profit*, that on the economic field labour fights where capital is strongest. Trade Union leaders ignore the economic development of the system which, by its concentration of wealth and evolution of industry, makes all real and lasting improvement for the workers impossible within capitalism.

Instead of preaching nostrums such as conciliation and nationalisation, Socialists teach the working class to understand the class struggle and the causes of their slavery with the object of organising them as a class for the abolition of capital, and the establishment of Socialism.

Not the "Mines for the Miners" but the World for the Workers.

## HOW THEY MAKE THEIR MONEY.

You do not know Mrs. Scarfe, of course. That is unfortunate. Probably, as one of the wealthiest women in Australia, she and you have had little chance of meeting. The *Daily News*, August 20th, informs us she has just arrived in London. "My money?" she said to that journal's interviewer. "Oh, the Scarfe money was made by hard work, and hardware—pots and pans, that is!"

Possibly a doubt assailed the interviewer as to the proportion in which the hard work and the hardware were allocated. Presumably he asked if the making or managing of so much money was a strenuous occupation. One is delighted to find a refreshing candour. "Oh, no! I don't 'manage' my money—I just take my share of the dividends."

O, Simple Simon, wake up!

W. T. H.

## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS. THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

(Continued from last month).

### THE WORKERS DEMAND THE FRANCHISE.

But the revolt of the workers though it could be repressed could not be destroyed. In spite of all opposition their Trade Unions, though declared illegal by the Combination Acts, persisted and waged a never-ceasing war of resistance against low wages, the extension of the working day and intolerable conditions of labour.

Side by side with the industrial struggle went on a ferment of political ideas at length issuing in demands that were the outcome of the antagonism between the social relations of capitalist economy—fostering ideas of “equal rights” and “individual liberty”—and the actual oligarchic form of the state with its assumption of unequal rights and of different grades of social status.

At first the workers' aspirations for political and legal rights were inarticulate and unorganised, but the spread of workers' associations, of discussion and reading and the growing ease of communication facilitated the growth of an organised movement. Political groups aiming at constitutional reform sprang up in the cities and these, though dominated by intellectuals and bourgeois radicals, had considerable influence amongst sections of the working class. One of the earliest was the London Corresponding Society, founded in 1797 by Hardy, a bootmaker. With it Paine and Godwin were associated. Its leaders nearly all suffered imprisonment or transportation. At a later date Cobbett carried on a vigorous agitation amongst the workers: “When he reduced ‘The Weekly Political Register’ from a shilling and a halfpenny to two-pence, 50,000 copies were scattered over the country, and everywhere men gathered in clubs to hear the paper read by one of them who had schooling” (Green's “Short History,” p. 846).

But the great political movement of the period was that of the industrial bourgeoisie. Their struggle for the Reform Bill was undoubtedly instrumental in rallying masses of the workers. But the political demands of the working men had roots independent

from and antagonistic to the basis of the bourgeois movement. To them electoral reform was primarily a means of alleviating their economic miseries. At the same time it is impossible to separate, in the stimulus behind their demands, the economic discontent that was the chief spur to action, from the force of the political ideas which gave their discontent expression in aspirations towards political democracy and demands which spoke eloquently of the extent to which they had moved from their old confirmed belief in the necessity of “status” and the inevitability of political privilege.

The details of the Reform Movement need not detain us, but it was a severe and a bloody struggle in which the workers bore the brunt of the fight. After forming the backbone of the struggle for the Reform Bill of 1832 which enfranchised the new capitalists but excluded themselves, the exasperated workers threw their strength into their own Chartist movement and carried on the conflict afresh. Again we may note that, though the Chartist working men meant political reform as a means to economic ends, the purely political demands of the Charter—manhood-suffrage, vote by ballot, etc.—indicate how widespread “democratic” and “libertarian” ideas had become.

Though the Chartist movement broke down and its demands were resisted, the concepts that it had done so much to popularise were now permanently rooted and could not be eradicated. But for a period the agitation for political reform died down. After the worst excesses of the factory-system had been alleviated by the Factory Acts, after a period of comparative prosperity due to the rapid extension of British production and its supremacy in the World Market and to the rising strength of their Unions, the workers had become reconciled to the system. Their Trades Unions, now tacitly recognised by the masters, became benefit societies and means of diplomatic negotiations with the employers. Their leaders declared the common interests of Capital and Labour, and counselled con-

ciliation and mutual good-will between the classes.

But in the “sixties” events revealed the legal insecurity of the Unions and their funds, and a strong demand ensued for their definite legalisation. Along with this movement began an active revival of the agitation for the franchise. Reform Leagues sprang up spontaneously all over the country. The “International,” founded in 1864 and led by Marx, actively supported the new movement. “All through the autumn and winter (1866-7) great meetings were held in the great towns and cities to promote the cause of reform. A most significant feature of these demonstrations was the part taken by the organised trades associations of working men.” (McCarthy—“Our Own Times.”) At length, as Engels says, “the workers' claims to the franchise gradually became irresistible,” and the ruling class gave way.

Significantly enough, it was the Tories who passed the second Reform Bill of 1867, which enfranchised a great mass of the town workers, thus demonstrating that even the most traditionally cautious party of the master class had seen “the writing on the wall,” and were convinced that working-class suffrage was inevitable. In 1872 the secret ballot was instituted, and in 1885 the vote was further extended to the counties and the agricultural workers.

The ruling-class had made in 1867 what Lord Derby called a “leap in the dark,” but, to their relief—though this must have been half-expected—the plunge proved harmless. It was soon overwhelmingly apparent that the working-class—though jealous enough in the defence of their immediate interests—had no thoughts of disrespect to or revolt from the “rights of property,” and that they believed and acted on the assumption that “capital” and “wages” were eternal categories, and the only practical basis of social life.

Before this, in America and in France, the workers had already achieved the franchise, and since then all over the capitalist world an enfranchised working-class has been recognised as the indispensable basis of stability in the State.

### THE GREAT ILLUSION.

With the vote, with his Unions legalised (1871 in England) and other legal rights established, the workers seemed to have

achieved what bourgeois historians regard the be-all and end-all of social evolution—full “civic rights and liberties.” They had in actuality reached the very fullest “freedom” as a class that they could achieve or even conceive so long as their ideas and aspirations kept within the bounds of the capitalist system. The facts of law and politics now no longer seemed in contradiction with the “liberty” and “individualism” of economic life. Did not the “people” now “rule the country,” did not they decide the fate of statesmen and governments, did not the politician plead and struggle for their support and tremble at their indecision? At last, the son of toil seemed truly a free man, and he could sing “Britons never, never, never!” with never a twinge of conscience.

That the overworked, ill-fed slave of the factory-blast can live in the same city with the gilded drones who live in luxurious leisure upon the product of his toil—and yet believe in the reality of his freedom—in liberty of contract and the reward of enterprise seems a ghastly joke. Yet the positive reality of the belief is a fact to which anyone who knows the workers can testify.

The wage-slave does not perceive that the unequal distribution of property into which he is born exercises as compelling a tyrannical control over his destiny as any law that the State can make. He is blind to the fact that freedom for property means slavery for those who possess none. He explains the inequality of wealth on the theory that the rich have been “lucky” or particularly clever. The man who has “got on” he admires, and he lives in the shadowy hope of following in his steps. His hero is the “self-made man.”

It is essential to clearly understand that the resignation of the average worker to the capitalist system and, indeed, his active support of it arises directly from the fact that he accepts private property in the means of life without question. Once this basis is granted, the support of the whole system follows of necessity. The worker may and does desire economic security, but this only results from control of the means of life. In the early days of the system the workers did endeavour to return to the measure of such control that the hand-tool period allowed them. They fought the machines and

tried to turn back the wheels of history. But with the generations that had grown up amongst and known nothing other than the machine system, such aspirations could have no place. The means of production were now giant mechanisms jointly operated—no one worker used them. So long as the traditions of individual ownership persisted, therefore, the workers could not own or even with sense think of owning the instruments they operated. The social productive mechanisms of modern society can only be owned by the users in common—and the idea of social ownership had not yet taken wide and deep root.

But the impossibility of security for the workers did not prevent them continuing to seek for it—but as they accepted the system they had also to accept the only method of aiming at security that the system offers— increase of income, through collective bargaining largely, but also through—if only as a vague but persistent aspiration—"getting on," if possible, accumulating property—processes that naturally foster the outlook of individualism.

(To be continued.)

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FROM THE

S.P.G.B., 17 Mount Pleasant London W.C.1

#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. Mosley (Notts).—We have no trace of a previous letter asking about trade unionism. Your suggestion that the weakness of our position lies in our aloofness from the trade union movement is not supported by any evidence. The aim of trade unions is not Socialism and, therefore, the principles and policy of The Socialist Party is quite distinct from those of trade unions.

Trade unions are organised within capitalism to "collectively bargain" with employers terms of wage slavery. The Socialist Party's aim is to abolish wage slavery and establish Socialism.

We recognise the necessity of trade unions under capitalism, and, therefore, endeavour to make them more effective by urging the workers to recognise the class struggle and its implications. The spread of Socialist knowledge is the best antidote to the poison of "labour-leaders," and is the only policy to hasten the abolition of wage slavery which trade unions are powerless to accomplish.—Ed. Com.

W. C. E. (Leyton).—Your question: "What is the relative economic position of the worker compared to 50 years ago?" will be dealt with in an article at an early date.

S. Warr (Southend) asks the following question:—

"As value is determined by social necessary labour power or time, what then would be the value of gold as means of exchange if its production were unrestricted and of great volume?"

"I ask this as the machinery, science and organisation of mines to-day has very greatly increased the production of gold; also the knowledge of its location."

(Answer).—The effect of the reduction of the value of gold due to less labour being required to produce it is that more gold has to be given in exchange for other articles. In other words, there is a general rise in prices. If gold could be produced with relatively very little labour, it would make it less suitable as a medium of exchange. It still contains, however, a large value in a small compass and, therefore, serves the purpose of a medium of exchange better than any other commodity.—Ed. Com.

#### THE ILLUSIONS OF ANTI-MILITARISTS.

When the workers outside the Army, Navy, etc., are opposed to Socialist ideas, is it likely that those inside the armed forces will be more sympathetic to revolutionary influences? The answer is emphatically, no. The powerful influence of capitalist tuition on the civil population is plain. And the more powerful effect of capitalist tuition on those in the "forces" is plainer still.

In spite of this, Pacifists and "Communists," who have never adopted a policy of educating the workers in Socialism, think it will be possible to permeate the armed forces with their ideas. Communists who talk about general strikes to seize power and direct action as the only way, suddenly decide that these policies are not sufficient. They now declare that the Army must be with the workers. If economic action to tie up industry and "starve the bosses" is the policy they believe in, why bother about the Army. They sometimes think that the armed forces will be starved by a general strike and that no Army can be moved because of a railway strike. But they drop all this moonshine suddenly and get the notion that the Army and Navy can be converted. The very same persons who loudly proclaim that the mass of the workers cannot be educated into Socialism tell us that the Army, being composed of workers, can be won for our ideas.

The dictatorship diehards who affirm that only a minority of the workers under capitalism can escape from mental slavery to the capitalist, these are the very same people who believe that those in armed camps can have their capitalistic education dispelled.

This "short cut" to Revolution is full of illusions. Take the position of a soldier. He is isolated in barracks and camps and there mentally drilled to obey orders. He is carefully segregated from the influences which might weaken the mental hold of capitalist tuition. He is given a security of food, clothing and shelter, which is denied in industrial life, and where unemployment is frequent. All the carefully arranged plans and codes of training mould the member of the armed forces so well, that of all the working class he is the least likely recruit to revolutionary ideas, especially in the leading capitalist countries.

Socialists, therefore, direct their attention chiefly to the civil population, regarding

them as the most likely recruits to Socialism. Without the bulk of the working class being won for Socialism, its establishment is impossible.

When the masses are converted to Socialist ideas and organised, and in control of the political machine, the armed forces will be under their control. While Socialists welcome the acceptance of Socialism by any and every member of the working class, we do not delude ourselves with the notion that any rapid or widespread conversion of the Army and Navy is possible. Soldiers may tire of prolonged war or be driven to stop fighting by lack of food, but that is not a conversion to the revolutionary policy of Socialism.

Anti-militarism does not denote an acceptance of Socialism. Pacifists and Liberals, Anarchists and Quakers, may all be anti-militarists, opposed to all wars, sighing for perfect peace, yearning for brotherly love, but they are dreamers and ignore the nature of the system under which we live. Armed forces are required by ruling classes to keep the subject class in slavery and wars are inseparable from a system of private property.

Socialists, therefore, go to the roots of the matter. The system depends upon the ignorance of the masses of workers and therefore until the workers obtain real knowledge of the causes of their conditions and organise in agreement with that knowledge—there is no possibility of abolishing the effects of the system.

The lurid appeal of the Communist, *Workers' Weekly*, asking the Labour Party to stop the soldiers being used against workers is another sign of Communist Party stupidity. With all the experience of the Labour Party as a Government and their willingness to use armed forces and pass Coercion Acts and support wars, no Socialist would ever expect them to assist the workers.

K.

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## H. G. WELLS' IDEALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS.

It has often been said that the ideal society will be one in which its members consciously direct their efforts for common good. In the moment when every man will promote the interests of his fellow men regardless of his own individual preferences, so soon will the highest conceivable stage of social progress have been reached. This popular view is also upheld by "pseudo-Socialists." H. G. Wells, in his "Outline of History," states "that the impulse to devotion, to universal service and to a complete escape from self . . . which ebbed so perceptibly during the prosperity, laxity, disillusionment and scepticism of the past seventy or eighty years will re-appear again, stripped and plain, as the recognised structural impulse in human society." This Christian sentiment, so lofty and admirable as it appears at first sight, devolves into a very mischievous doctrine—a common consequence of Christian ethics. Here we are led to imagine society as being an undivided mass of individuals each one being capable of a free-will offering to the common prosperity. The idea implies that poverty and all social inequalities can be accounted for by a lack of certain tender feelings on the part of the richer individuals. Mr. Wells has discovered that they have not sufficiently exercised their "impulse to devotion, universal service, etc." Then what is the remedy? Surely, to convince these misguided wrong-doers of the errors of their ways and persuade them in the Wellsian manner—whatever that may be—to pay more regard in future to the interests of their poorer neighbours. Presumably, they are required to part with a portion of their wealth and distribute it among the unfortunate beings who somehow managed to combine a Christian heart with an empty pocket. It was with exactly this end in view that the Labour Party launched their scheme for a Capital Levy. This was indeed a brilliant idea, concealed in the Gospel of Christ, obscured for nineteen hundred years of misery and want, and re-discovered at last by Mr. Pethick Lawrence under the inspiration of Mr. Wells! There is but to allow for a Labour Government to give practical application to the divine plan and behold, labour shall cease its awful strife with capital and both shall for ever go arm

in arm together. But in the meantime, let us repair to the churches to solicit the spiritual aid of Jesus Christ and Mr. Wells, his prophet!

The Capital Levy might satisfy the Labour Party but it offers no solution to the economic problem. So long as Capitalists own the means of life, so long will the workers be enslaved as wage-earners and poverty prevail. They must concede to the condition that their portion of the wealth produced by his labour—whether paid in the form of wages, salary or otherwise—shall be reduced to something like a living minimum. If he declines this condition, his labour-power is not purchased and he is left to starve into submission. The worker's prospects under the present system are, therefore, in general entirely hopeless and the Capital Levy can have no effect whatever upon his economic status. The only logical solution to the worker's problem is to grapple with its roots. The secret of the Capitalists' power is the fact that they own the means of production, giving them illimitable authority over the whole social system. The worker's aim, therefore, must be to capture the means of production. This is a task in which the solemn worship of divinity in any form will avail nothing. It will be accomplished only when a workers' class-conscious majority has achieved political power and wields it in the communal interest. This being established, social progress enters upon a new lease of life which is the only Socialism.

To the sentimental advocates of "complete escape from self," there is one unmistakable reply—it is unhuman. It does not conform with man's mental make-up. We have to admit that the first, greatest and happiest effort of the individual is to consider his *own* welfare. But in human society—and possibly among the higher animals—there is a conscious co-operation between individuals for the purpose of facilitating the struggle for existence. This combination of effort occurs only in the presence of a common enemy, whose defeat can better be secured by social rather than by individual effort. In other words, "mutual aid"—as this co-operative practice is called—is adopted under pressure of necessity when the individual welfare is being threatened. Apart from the union of similar egoistic ambitions, it has no exist-

ence; it rests, not on any moral basis, but only on one of utility.

The truth of this interpretation of "mutual aid" is born out in the facts of modern industrial history. The workers are to-day expressing dissatisfaction with their standard of living. This discontent is manifested in the Trade Unions in which each member aims at promoting his own individual interest, or rather, we should say, *apparent* interest. To do this more effectively, he is obliged, often against his immediate desire, to unite with his fellow-workers and employ the machinery of the Trade Union to fulfil the common collective demands of the whole body of workers. In order to benefit individually, the workers must act collectively; it is a condition forced upon them by the very magnitude of the modern economic system. They, therefore, employ "mutual aid" but essentially to further the apparent interests of the individual, that is to say, an improvement in the standard of living. For no other cause will they co-operate than for this egoistic purpose.

But this process, as practised to-day by the Trade Unions and the Labour Party, is confused with an element of ignorance. The workers are being educated into the false view that their economic emancipation lies at the far end of a series of steadily improving scale of wages. All that the workers are taught is to strive for a slightly larger share of the wealth they produce. They seek only to gratify their immediate and apparent interests. The result of this policy has been the ever-increasing poverty by which the present society is distinguished.

The Socialist Party, based upon a thorough understanding of the Capitalist mode of exploitation, makes full use of this experience. Under the present economic system the worker receives only a small fraction of the wealth he produces. His scale of wages is determined, on the average, by the cost of his subsistence and the reproduction of his kind. An increased wage scale is, therefore, only of temporary benefit to the workers. The solution of the Socialist Party, briefly stated, is to secure, not a larger fraction of the wealth produced, but actually the whole value of the productions. It is the one indispensable condition by which Capitalist exploitation will definitely cease to exist and for which the class war, as the collective endeavour of individuals, must be waged.

Socialism, therefore, far from advocating "escape from self" really preaches the doctrine of self-interest as the essential feature of a contented community. It is the ideal by the attainment of which the emancipation of the working class and, with it, of society at large will be established. The workers must learn to cease being satisfied with the crumbs which fall from the richly spread table of Capitalism. Nor is it enough that when the crumbs cease to fall, they beg like Oliver Twist for more. They must stimulate their individual interests to the fullest limit and vote for Socialism, *i.e.*, the collective ownership of the means of life. It is a simple doctrine, but an all-engaging one. Any ideal short of this may very aptly conform to the reactionary elements of Christianity. But it is not Socialism and will lead society to anything but complete emancipation.

"THOUSANDS."

## THE MEANING OF THE PENSIONS BILL.

"I submit that this scheme is a social insurance scheme in more than one sense. It is a good scheme of insurance for the poor, and it safeguards them against some of the risks and anxieties of life, but it is also a good insurance scheme for the rich. The rich should pay up and so avoid the dangers of the social revolution." Speech of Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (Hansard, 19/5/25, Column 354).

## NOTICE.

Will members and sympathisers living in or around the Paddington District communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, with a view to forming a Branch in that district.

## S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

### LONDON DISTRICT.

- Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.
- Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.
- Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.
- Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.
- Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to E. Jesper, 74 Murdoch-rd., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., J. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—Sec., A.L. Myerson, 53, Marshall Place, Hightown, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Broad Lane, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

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**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No. 254. Vol. 22.]

LONDON, OCTOBER, 1925.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## SOCIALISM AND EMPIRE.

Patriotism and the problems of Empire have always proved stumbling blocks to the workers and to their immature organisations, and nothing has more clearly shown the danger of half-knowledge than the ease with which the ruling class have been able to muddle their minds and inflame their passions by raising such issues. The world war and late developments of capitalist imperialism have given the question prominence by making more numerous and more bitter the struggles for independence of colonies and subject races, and in the verbal dispute between Communists, the I.L.P., the Labour Party and others the air is thick with charge and counter-charge of treachery to the Empire and treachery to the working class. The dispute, however, leads to no simple conclusion because, as so often happens, the disputants have neglected first to decide whether they can agree on a few elementary Socialist principles. Before we examine the various proposals we must have a clear idea of the economic position and class interests of the workers, because it is from this foundation that they ought always to approach the issues presented to them.

### THE POSITION OF THE WORKERS.

Wealth (excluding the air and other things abundantly supplied by nature) is produced by work. The work is performed by the great propertyless mass, the working class, but the means of wealth production, the machines, the land and so on, are owned by a class of non-workers, the capitalists. From this arises a great cleavage of interests, for it makes the workers dependent upon the owning class since they cannot live except by entering the service of the owners. Out of the total wealth produced by their labour the workers receive but a

part as wages, the remainder being retained by those who employ them. The one class lives by selling its services and the other by owning property. The everyday struggle over the division of the product sets these classes in perpetual antagonism, but the Socialist urges the workers to aim consciously not merely at increasing their share but at destroying the system of society which compels them to maintain a propertied class at their expense.

For the Socialist all forms of "living by owning," rent, interest and profit are in effect nothing more than forms of exploitation, or robbery, of the wealth producers.

If this is correct, then it follows naturally that it is to the interest of the workers all over the world to act jointly in resisting any attempt to heighten the degree of that exploitation, and in overthrowing the system which is based upon exploitation. The enemy of the working class is the capitalist class.

But certain complications exist which prevent many workers from seeing where their interests lie. Lack of knowledge and race prejudices prevent those in one country from realising how essentially similar is their condition to that of workers in foreign countries. There are too real differences between the present circumstances of the workers in the more advanced and the more backward countries. Standards of living, of education, of political and personal freedom, and of political knowledge vary from, say, England or America to the hardly developed Asiatic dependencies of Great Britain; this in spite of the quite marked tendency towards a general equalising of conditions as industrial developments become more uniform all over the world under the pressure of competition.

Again, this very competition leads many workers astray. Exceptional prosperity in the British coal industry at a given time is gained at the expense of some foreign competitors. Viewing the matter from an individual and local standpoint, the miners are only too liable to agree with their employers who argue that the interests of British workers and owners are as one against those of their German or American rivals. Extending our view from one section of a capitalist industry to the whole of the industries of a country or group of countries, national rivalry often presents itself in such a form—war, for instance—as to induce great numbers of workers to join their own section of the ruling class against other sections which are likewise supported by their workers.

#### THE POSITION OF THE CAPITALIST.

Capitalist countries—all of them—must organise their forces and direct their policy to ends which are vital to capitalist society, they must seek markets for surplus products, endeavour to monopolise sources of supply of raw materials where these are geographically limited, and protect ocean and overland communications to these areas. Britain holds tenaciously to her practical monopoly of tropical rubber producing areas, sits tight in Egypt in order to guard the routes to India, and keeps firm hold on the latter because it is a market of first importance and an area for the profitable investment of surplus profit gained by the exploitation of workers at home. The necessities of such imperialist policy bring our ruling class into inevitable conflict with other imperialist powers who also seek markets and monopolies, and into conflict with the colonial and native capitalists who resent having to share with foreign investors the profits of the exploitation of their own working class; hence the war of 1914, and the independence movements in Ireland, India, Egypt, Canada and elsewhere.

Now let us examine the various parties in this country which claim to represent the working class.

#### THE LABOUR PARTY.

The LABOUR PARTY openly and unashamedly supported the war in 1914 and associates now with its German patriot prototypes, the Social Democrats. It interests itself in the political and economic difficulties of the British capitalists, offers

remedies to solve their industrial problems, assists in maintaining armed forces to defend capitalist property, loyally supports the Empire and opposes the grant of unconditional independence to any part of it. It is unnecessary to labour this point or answer the assertion that the Labour Party has changed for the better since the war because Mr. H. N. Brailsford, Editor of the *New Leader*, has recently written of the position now occupied by his party.

We must face our own record as frankly. (I speak, of course, only for myself.) From the date of Mr. MacDonald's first letter to the Indians on the eve of taking office, down to the recent debates on China, India, and our rubber monopoly, he and his closest associate, Mr. Thomas, have been leading the Party, openly and plainly, towards a reconciliation with Imperialism. His Indian record in office was worse than negative. Not only did he do nothing to advance Home Rule or to help the sweated Indian worker: he sanctioned the shameful Coercion Act in Bengal. His most recent speech gave reasons for doing nothing in India of which an old-fashioned Liberal would have been ashamed. There were other symptoms—the attitude to Mexico, the curt refusal of the Cypriote petition for union with Greece. But the gravest matter was his plain rejection of the League of Nations as the arbiter in our dispute with Egypt over the Canal and the Soudan. . . . We stand, as the French Party stands, a buttress of capitalist Imperialism. (*New Leader*, August 21st, 1925.)

Leaving aside the influence of Liberal tradition and the habitual unthinking acceptance of capitalist ways of regarding politics, the ultimate explanation of this Labour Party attitude is that they have no basic quarrel with the capitalists or capitalism. They regard "profiteering" (or excessive profits) as "unjust," but they do not hold all profit-making to be robbery of the workers. When they speak of "exploitation" what they mean is the payment of exceptionally low wages, they do not recognise that there can be no wage-earning, no wages system without exploitation. Thus Mr. Thomas, in "When Labour Rules," Mr. MacDonald in "Socialism—Critical and Constructive," Mr. Sydney Webb in "A Constitution for a Socialist Commonwealth," all justify private property and the payment of profits, or interest to property owners. As Mr. Clynes says, "It is no part of Labour's policy to establish revolutionary Socialism or to confiscate private property" (*Glasgow Evening News*, Oct. 4, 1923). Thus again in 1914 the workers of this country were urged by the Labour Party to fight lest they should,

through a German victory, become slaves; and when the French occupied the Ruhr the same Party protested on the ground that it would make the German workers slaves. We, on the contrary, recognise that all the workers in a capitalist world are already wage-slaves to the propertied class, and that no fortune of war, whether victory or defeat, can alter the essentials of that situation. As we propose to deprive the capitalists of their property and do not admit that they have any rights whatever, it matters nothing to us that capitalist groups strive to plunder each other. The Labour Party recognise those property rights and therefore quite consistently seek to defend those whom they consider to be the rightful owners. It is consistent with their views of property but it is decidedly not consistent with working class interests and with Socialism.

#### "THE COMMUNIST PARTY."

This attitude does not meet with the approval of the Communists who oppose to the patriotism of the Labour Party an inverted patriotism of their own. They can see clearly enough that the interests of British workers clash with those of British capitalists but they cannot rest content with urging the workers everywhere to concentrate on resisting exploitation and on fighting their exploiters. They accept the false reasoning used by Mr. Francis Meynell when he edited the *Communist*. He urged support of the Indian native capitalists in their struggle against the British Government, on the ground that all enemies of the latter are the friends of the Communist Party. They proclaim the necessity and practicability of disrupting the British Empire, and ally themselves accordingly with every independence movement. What they forget or intentionally gloss over, is that national independence for Irish, Indians or Egyptians is no more a concern of the workers in those countries and should no more be fought for by them than national defence should concern workers here. To exchange Irish exploiters for English ones does not better the condition of Irish workers in the slightest degree; in actual fact, by stressing racial differences it adds to the obstacles preventing international co-operation in the trade union and political world. The enemies of the British ruling class are not necessarily friends of the British workers. We want to increase, not to

obscure, the antagonism between one class and the other, and this cannot be done by urging Indian wage-slaves to waste precious years chasing the will o' the wisp of nationality. Their masters alone will gain from such a course.

The Communist mind is also perverted by the determination not to read the signs of the times in Russia. British governmental hostility to the Russian Government leads the Communists to completely uncritical praise of the latter's actions, oblivious of the extent to which those actions are driven by pressure of circumstance against working class interests. The Communists know quite well that there is no solution for the unemployment problem to be found in developing foreign trade, yet they have for years lent themselves to the anti-working class propaganda which promises untold benefits for British workers if only full trading relations with Russia are opened up. At present much of the hostility to the Bolshevik Government arises from the wish of foreign capitalists to have free access to this relatively undeveloped field for investment and exploitation. But whether that field is developed with or without the direct control of foreign capital, the entry of this new competitor into the world's markets can only result in a worsening of the industrial conditions of workers generally, and an aggravation of the clashing of interests between capitalist groups. The Communists, too, like the Labour Party, refuse to recognise that exploitation is the necessary accompaniment of wage-labour. When the Labour Government proposed a £40,000,000 loan to Russia, the Communists were overjoyed, and Russian trade papers in their anxiety to attract foreign capital are full of reports of high profits earned by foreign traders and concessionaires. They decline to face the plain fact that interest on loans and profits on investments can come only from the exploitation of the Russian workers.

T. Johnston, I.L.P. member of Parliament and Editor of the *Forward*, takes the Communists to task for what he calls their "Whiggery in a Red Cravat." He rightly condemns the obscured vision which can draw distinctions between sections of the capitalist class and see a friend of the workers in every exploiter who happens to have a quarrel with the British Empire. But Johnston himself is open to equal con-

demnation. He also is prepared to support schemes for the improvement of Empire trade, schemes, that is, to assist Empire capital in driving competitors from the world's markets. Neither he nor anyone else has ever yet explained how this will benefit the world's workers. The poverty in work, and greater poverty out of work, of the wage-earner is *not* dependent on the temporary ups and downs in particular industries or of all industries together. However, the total product of industry may vary with foreign trade fluctuations, there always has been, and is now, an enormous residue over and above wages, doles and relief, which is retained and consumed by the propertied class. What idiocy it is to tell the workers they must revive trade in order to get work and increase their wages, while an idle class is living on the product of the workers' labour. When the workers wish they have the power in their hands to cut into that existing surplus whether trade is good or bad, or getting better or worse. While there is a single able-bodied property-owner living without working, only ignorance or treachery could ask the workers to devote thought to the increase of production, or to the quickening of foreign trade.

Johnston, again, owes his confusion to his inability to grasp what is meant by exploitation. Thus in *Forward* (Sept. 19) he writes in favour of the Labour movement here giving more attention to and entering into more cordial relations with Queensland which has a Labour Government. On the strength of this latter feature, Johnston, while repeating parrot-like the necessity of fighting exploitation, dubs Queensland a proletarian State. Actually, Queensland Government publications and the speeches of Labour Ministers and Members of Parliament demonstrate the incontrovertible fact that capitalist profits and the degree of exploitation of the workers in Queensland are greater, and the proportion of total production received by them as wages is less, than in any other Australian State now, and than was the case in Queensland when the Labour Government first took office! (See *Socialist Standard*, Dec., 1923, and Feb., 1924.)

#### THE SOCIALIST POSITION.

The only safe rule of conduct for the workers is to stand firmly on the basis of their class economic interests. From this

standpoint there can be no circumstances requiring them to participate in capitalist wars or trade rivalries. Even the supposed hardships resulting from military defeat do not outweigh the arguments in favour of the Socialist course of action outlined above. We have always urged that Reparations like rates and taxes are and must be a burden only on the propertied class. We are therefore not surprised to learn from the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (June, 1925, Page 217) that an enquiry by the International Labour Office shows that real wages in Germany are approximately what they were in 1914 as are also wages in London. In victory and defeat the workers are still wage slaves, their poverty and insecurity are their only lifelong possession. They should not fight for "country and empire," because they have nothing to fight for. They should refuse to help solve the economic problems of capitalist industry, or the political problems of capitalist empires and concentrate all their energies on the fight for Socialism. H.

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Readers of this paper who want to see new pamphlets issued, explaining the Socialist position, are invited to send their donations (large or small), at once. We have the manuscript of a pamphlet on Socialism ready for the printers but funds are urgently needed.

#### PUBLICATIONS FUND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

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## ECONOMICS AND IDEAS.

### THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

(Concluded from last month).

#### SCHOOL, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

The impregnation of the worker's mind with individualist beliefs and his delusion of freedom are obviously a tremendous asset—practically a necessity—to the smooth running and perpetuation of the capitalist order. This was early recognised by intelligent agents of the employing class, and, from the dawn of the system the deliberate fostering and strengthening of such ideas by propaganda was attempted—but in an inefficient and unorganised way. But after the workers had won the franchise, definite organs for their "instruction" in the "way they should think" were necessary. "Now, if ever," says Engels, "the people must be kept in order by moral means." Engels, in his "Socialism—Utopian and Scientific" (Introduction), goes on to show the use the English bourgeoisie made of religion. Here we will consider three other agents—the school, the press, and the platform.

Upon the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867, one prominent politician sarcastically exclaimed, "Now we must educate our new masters." Within three years the first State education scheme in England was adopted, and the Board Schools established. Six years later (1876), elementary education was made compulsory. No worker could now escape from acquiring not only the groundwork of bourgeois ideology in his most impressionable years, but also the special national applications of it through falsified history and the glorification of his "heritage"—the constitutional "charter" of his "liberties." The training of the young worker was a master stroke of the ruling class.

Newspapers from their origin had hitherto been primarily organs of opinion and information amongst the propertied classes—and solid, serious, relatively trustworthy, and comparatively expensive. But when the workers had the capacity to read and the power of the vote, the press developed a new purpose and with it new methods and characteristics. The press especially for proletarian consumption—the sensational, hypocritical, lying, "yellow press"—appeared. In 1855 the Stamp Act had been

repealed, and this, with new developments in paper-making, made a more popular press possible. New cheap papers sprang up all over the country, and old ones reduced their price. But it was after the extension of the franchise that the great developments occurred. The "Britannica" article, "Newspapers," clearly states its basis:—

Between 1870 and 1880 a complete revolution was effected as a result of social and educational changes" (564). "The modern impulse culminating in England in the last decade of the 19th century in what was then called the 'New Journalism,' was a direct product of American conditions and ways of life (political democracy), but in Great Britain it was also the result of the democratic movement produced by the Education Act of 1870 and the Reform Act of 1885, and it affected more or less all countries which came within the influence of free institutions." (11th ed., vol. 19, p. 547.)

The modern newspaper sets before the worker distorted "news" and a view of affairs deliberately calculated to foster the hold over him of bourgeois ideology. It does not produce this ideology, but constantly provides fresh details acceptable to it—the "evidence" upon which it feeds and thrives.

That unique political fact, an enfranchised slave-class, furthermore, meant the unqualified triumph of the type of politician whose business it is to deliberately cajole and mislead the electorate. In his "Democracy and Liberty," Lecky deplores the deterioration of English "political morality" that came after 1867—without, however, recording the true cause of it. The new political showmen were a necessity of the new political situation. They became the latest popular "heroes of society." To regularly give a semblance of intense sincerity to the most hypocritical arguments is no light task, and men who excelled in it won the gratitude of the ruling class. Lloyd George is, of course, a splendid latter-day specimen, but perhaps the most skilful of all the modern political demagogues was Gladstone. Lecky, in the book mentioned, commenting on his special abilities says:—

No one could compare with him in dexterity of word fencing and hair-splitting, and in the evasive subtleties of debate. . . . Nothing was more curious than to hear him make a speech on a

subject on which he did not wish to give an opinion. The long roll of sonorous and misty sentences, each statement ingeniously qualified, each approach to precision so skilfully shaded by some calculated ambiguity of phrase, speedily baffled the attentive listener. . . . There was seldom a speaker from whose words it was so difficult to extricate a precise meaning; who so constantly used language susceptible of different interpretations; who so often seemed to say a thing, and by seeming to say it raised hopes and won influence and applause without definitely binding himself to it. Further, no other great politician so habitually steeped his politics in emotion, and this was one great cause of his wide, popular influence.

Gladstone became the most popular and adored statesman of his time, and his portrait, along with that of Jesus Christ, still defaces the walls in thousands of working-class houses. Finally, it is significant that in the United States—the land of “liberty” in excelsis—where the workers have been enfranchised for a longer period than in any other capitalist State, the art of the “spell-binder”—of gushing, emotional, meaningless, wordy rhetoric—has achieved its most exquisite development.

#### THE MODERN STATE.

The school, the press, and the platform are used assiduously to foster the “great illusion” of capitalism—that the worker is a free man, possessing freedom of opportunity with every other man, and liberty of contract. The preservation of this illusion is almost a necessity to, and is certainly one of the greatest safeguards of, the present system—and is recognised as such by the clear-sighted agents of the ruling class. The bourgeoisie are compelled to avoid anything that will tend to destroy this illusion. Even the “right to strike,” apparently menaced from time to time by “compulsory arbitration” schemes, is a necessity to the capitalists as well as to the workers—and the more far-seeing members of the employing class well know it. If ever the capitalists, in the height of fear and folly, endeavour to force the proletariat, as a class, to labour by law, and thus to thrust them into a legally recognised worker’s “status,” then indeed their days of power will be numbered.

For the same reason we may regard the enfranchisement of the workers, once established, as a necessity for the continued existence of the system. The ideology of the proletariat, flowing, as we have seen, from the relations of production, makes it inevitable. Engels says: “The highest

form of the State, the democratic republic, knows officially nothing of property distinctions. It is that form of the State which, under modern conditions of society, becomes more and more an unavoidable necessity. The last decisive struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can only be fought out under this State form” (“Origin of the Family,” p. 210). But we must not, of course, overlook the fact that the capitalist system and its State forms are still in process of development, and that there exists to-day in concrete reality a number of capitalist societies, each with a different history and each showing minor traits peculiar to itself. In Europe nearly every State contains vestigial institutions left over from Feudalism which affect its activities to a greater or less degree. More important, however, is the fact that capitalist production has by no means completely eliminated petty industry, and, in particular, wherever the peasantry are numerically very strong, as in Spain, France, and Italy, democratic forms can at least be temporarily suspended without immediate injury to the ruling class. Were the majority of the Italian population, for instance, proletarians, it is certain that the Fascisti reaction would have been much more hazardous, if not impossible.

The necessity of the Parliamentary State, with an enfranchised working class, where capitalism is highly developed and the industrial proletariat strong, was vividly demonstrated after the collapse of the German Empire in 1918, when, amid an unprecedented political crisis, when larger masses of workers were agitated and organised for revolt than probably at any other time in capitalist history, the bourgeoisie were compelled to set up the most democratic republican constitution in the world, with male and female suffrage over the age of twenty, proportional representation, and the referendum.

The State, however, of no matter what period or what form—monarchic, oligarchic, or parliamentary—remains in essence the same. It has one function, and one essential function alone—the preservation of the property of the exploiting class, and, accordingly, the suppression of the exploited. Throughout the history of capitalism the State has served as the instrument of the bourgeoisie. The slaughter of the Communards of Paris, the bloody

suppression of strikes all over the world, from Homestead to Featherstone, Colorado to Johannesburg, are evidence that it has served right well its historic function.

The capitalist class dominate society to-day because they control the public forces of coercion. But, unlike the ruling classes of other ages, this control does not arise from the fact that they themselves are the essential part of those forces. The bourgeoisie are not, and never have been, a military class. They, unlike their predecessors at the helm of State, are not only economically, but politically and militarily, entirely dependent upon the working masses. The workers make up almost in entirety the armed forces, and the workers, through the political machinery and through their bourgeois ideas, place these forces in the hands of their oppressors. The capitalists rule the immense majority of society because that immense majority sanctions their rule. The slave and the serf knew they were enslaved and exploited; the wage-worker does not. The economic relations of modern production serve to disguise the fact of exploitation, and, furthermore, tend to generate that widespread individualism and the illusion of freedom that facilitates the inculcation of ideas and opinions favourable to bourgeois rule.

As Engels says: “The possessing class rule directly through universal suffrage. For so long as the oppressed class, in this case the proletariat, is not ripe for its economic emancipation, just so long will its majority regard the existing order of society as the only one possible” (“Origin of the Family,” p. 210). And when will the proletariat be “ripe for its emancipation”—except just when they realise that they require emancipating and understand the facts of their exploitation? Not when they begin to know that there is something rotten in the state of capitalism—for they know that now—but when they realise the cause of that rottenness. Then, when they grasp the truth that the evils of capitalism are inherent and inevitable, not accidental and curable, will they set about its destruction and the inauguration of a Socialist society in which the producers will control production and the distribution of its product. This transformation of attitude towards the system will involve, necessarily, the shattering of the illusion of “freedom,” and the replacement of economic individualism by a realisation of the possibilities of social ownership.

The essential process that must precede the proletarian revolution is the preparation and education of the workers for their revolutionary task. By “education” we mean, primarily, the education flowing from observation and reasoning—the instruction of experience. To-day Socialists as a body are largely students who have acquired their mental outlook on society to a great extent by books and lectures—secondhand, so to speak. So long as the simple elements of Socialist thought generally necessitate this kind of preparation, the Socialist movement is in its early, almost embryonic, stage. Not until the basic proposition of Socialist theory takes root in the minds of masses of men because they are the inescapable inferences from the facts of social life, provide the obvious solution for the pressing, immediate problems of the social situation, and are so self-evident that no counter-propaganda can efface them—not until then can we consider that the movement has reached maturity.

There is evidence that capitalism has yet a considerable future before it; a future of intensive exploitation of the yet untouched areas of the earth; a future of economic centralisation crushing out the last effective remnants of individualism; a future of imperialism and war, of industrial and political anarchy without parallel; a future in which the workers will be hammered and battered into a recognition of social realities.

But alongside the education of experience and practice will go also the education in theoretical principles and tactics born of the conception of history we owe so greatly to Marx. The first form will provide the necessary groundwork of class-consciousness; the second, the essential guidance to a policy avoiding the pitfalls and errors that beset a revolutionary class groping its way amid endless problems along the path towards emancipation.

When the “knell of capitalist private property sounds” and the workers are massed in their might to overwhelm the puny masqueraders—fossil guardians of order and civilisation—they will move with a resolute intention that nothing can frustrate, win the powers of society from the paralysed hands of the parasites of property, and, with confidence born of knowledge, forged in struggle, build up on the basis of man’s conquests over nature the Co-operative Commonwealth.

R. W. HOUSLEY.

**OFFICIAL NOTICE.**

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable.

The meetings of the Executive Committee are held at the Head Office, every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.

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**THE LABOUR PARTY'S LIBERAL PROGRAMME.**

The Executive of the Labour Party are submitting to the Liverpool Conference of that Party a policy of "National Reconstruction and Reform" which they claim will secure for all workers "the reward and security to which their activities rightly entitle them."

This so-called Labour policy declares for closer contact between the Home Government and the Colonial Governments; "a scientific redistribution of land within the British Commonwealth"; special information offices for emigrants and preliminary training before going overseas; Government purchase of Colonial produce; and financial assistance to British farmers.

On the question of unemployment the Programme states that "it is an inevitable accompaniment of capitalist production" and can only be prevented by Socialism. But the Labour Party goes on to demand the appointment of a National Employment Board whose duty shall be "To inquire into the nature of and remedies for unemployment"! This Board is also to prepare schemes of national development.

On the land question the Labour Programme demands the old Liberal policy of the Taxation of Land Values. In agricul-

ture the Labour Programme is for a minimum wage of 1s. per hour for a 48-hour week.

This 1925 Programme of the Labour Party is, in reality, a policy that every capitalist can support. It offers all the nostrums for perpetuating the capitalist system, and advocates the reactionary schemes of so-called reformers, from Emigration to Taxation of Land Values. After an admission that unemployment is caused by capitalism and can only be cured by Socialism, these Labour politicians want a Board to enquire into unemployment and its remedy.

The Programme is in no sense a working-class programme; it deals with effects, and deals with them in such a way as to preserve the interests of property and its owners. It is one of the clearest capitalist programmes that the mis-called Labour Party has ever drawn up, and it shows that between Labourism and Liberalism there is a close contact in "ideas" as well as persons.

Even the Editor of the *New Leader* has to make this confession about the "Labour Programme" (*New Leader*, Sept. 25, 1925):—

It is not the programme of a party which asks for power because it has the will to re-shape our disordered society. There are no guiding lines in it, no inspiring ideas. It is a collection of proposals for reform, most of them salutary and some of them important. Yet no one reading it, even with close attention, would say, "Here is the ground plan of a Socialist Society." One jolts along from one proposal to another, assenting, indeed, to most of them, but never catching a glimpse of the real purpose in view. What is it? To redistribute the wealth of the community? To make an end of the tributes of rent and profit and interest? To win for the whole working community the power to order its daily life? No Socialist strategy is apparent. One does not feel that the authors of this compilation ever asked themselves the question: What are the urgent things which we must do to win Socialism? Which are the roads to economic power? The Conference may alter and amplify and amend, but no process of amendment will ever make this a good programme. It will not inspire the Socialist thinker, nor will it fire the enthusiasm of the simple worker and his wife.

**A DISCUSSION CLASS**

will be held every alternate Thursday evening (from October 8th, 1925), at 167, Romford Road, Stratford, E.15, at 8 p.m.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY AND ITS CATHOLIC DEFENDERS.**

The Socialist Party has never sought to hide its hostility to all forms of religion. It frankly opposes all organisations, from the Church of Rome downwards, which seek to maintain the mental thralldom of the working class. In a special pamphlet and frequently in these columns attention has been drawn to the fact that religion in its present form is a part of the capitalist society, standing or falling therewith.

Additional evidence in this direction is afforded by a twopenny pamphlet recently issued by the Catholic Truth Society, entitled "The Catholic Church and the Principle of Private Property" by Hilaire Belloc. Herein the author attempts to defend private property; not indeed, in its present-day capitalistic form, but in its pre-capitalistic, medieval or catholic form. Apparently Mr. Belloc regards capitalism as being almost, if not quite, as immoral as Socialism; not least because Socialism is the logical outcome of capitalism! To him the economic relations existing during the Middle Ages were the only normal, and therefore moral, relations possible, and his remedy for the present-day social conflict is a return to these relations (p. 28). He would reverse the process of capitalist accumulation by "just fiscal laws" (p. 13).

The Socialist can afford to smile at such childish proposals, for the simple reason that they have not the remotest chance of being adopted by any political party in real earnest. The fate of Anti-Trust laws in America, for example, is a painful object-lesson for all would-be reformers on those lines. Further, if Socialism arises out of capitalism, as Mr. Belloc correctly points out, it is equally true that capitalism was the inevitable outcome of Feudal society.

The principle of private property (which Mr. Belloc holds is a fundamental human institution) is no "eternal truth." It has varied from age to age in accordance with the variation in the means and methods of production. The development of these means and methods forms the basis of social development. It was not, as Mr. Belloc holds, the revolt against Rome which gave rise to industrialism. On the contrary, it was precisely the other way about. The expansion of trade and the rise of manufacture was the cause, not the effect, of

the Reformation. The burgesses of the rising towns opposed the Church, not primarily because they disagreed with her doctrines, but because they saw in her landed possessions and political power a bulwark of the system which oppressed them.

At one time the Church held a third of the land of Christian Europe. Her wealthy prelates were feudal lords, able to raise small armies of tenants and retainers, and were admitted to the seats of the mighty as part of the second estate of the realm. No wonder, then, that the zealous Catholic of to-day looks back with longing on the vanished past and views with jealous hatred the class which has usurped wealth and power; but the Church has learned to temper her celestial pretensions with worldly wisdom, and has accommodated herself to the requirements of her new masters. Whatever she may proclaim as theory, her actions are circumspect and law-abiding, and her heaviest denunciations fall on the rebel workers.

Similarly, Mr. Belloc, a "critic" of capitalism, was for years an active member of the capitalist Liberal Party and supported with "commendable" literary courage the Allied capitalist Governments during the recent war. The fact that his fellow-Christians were slaughtering one another for the sake of trade routes and markets, oil-wells and cotton lands, did not seem to worry him. This, however, by the way.

The medieval system of society collapsed largely because it was founded on the isolation of the producers. The peasants in the country and the craft guilds in the towns were unable to withstand the nation-wide activities of the merchant class. Assuming that by some miracle the workers could again enter into individual possession of the means of production, it would require another miracle to prevent history repeating itself.

Collective production as organised by capitalism is more economical than individual production. Machinery which is used against the workers by the capitalist class so long as they possess it will be used for the workers when the latter assume possession; but how are the workers to become individually the possessors of machinery? Mr. Belloc does not tell us! "The workers operate the machines in common; let them be possessed in

common." That is the proposal of the Socialist. A system of society based upon the common ownership of the means of life—that is Socialism; but Mr. Belloc assures us that "there is nothing new nor anything requiring a moment's study in the proposal" (p. 22).

He is not averse, however, to betraying his ignorance. Thus he confuses Marxism with Proudhonism, and describes Marx as a mere populariser of Proudhon's ideas. Apparently he has never read or even heard of "The Poverty of Philosophy," in which Marx tore to pieces Proudhon's "Philosophy of Poverty." According to Mr. Belloc, Proudhon was brilliant, while Marx was dull. The latter merely "sat down to write a book," which the former (although "a literary genius") presumably could not do. It is interesting to note, however, that while the compilers of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" consider Marx's theories important enough to devote two or three columns to, they confess their inability to reduce Proudhon's ideas to any system.

The simple fact is that there was a fundamental divergence between the views of the two men. Proudhon took his stand, as Mr. Belloc points out, on the view that private property was *immoral* under all conditions. Not so Marx. The doctrine of historical materialism formulated by him showed that moral conceptions themselves arose from economic conditions which varied from age to age. While Proudhon, as the spokesman of "eternal justice," pleaded for an "equal exchange" to abolish exploitation, Marx showed that, on the average, exchange already was equal and that the exploitation took place, not in the realm of exchange, but in that of production! Finally, Marx held that capitalism was doomed, not because it was "unjust," but because it was a fetter on further economic development and inimical to the interests of an ever-increasing majority in society.

Details like these, however, are beneath the notice of smart men like Mr. Belloc. Consequently, he proceeds to confuse materialism with fatalism. To hold that the human will is determined or shaped by the conditions of its existence is to deny its existence! This is his idea of logic!

After this the reader will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Belloc shows a common inability to distinguish between democracy

and bureaucracy. He trots out the moth-eaten bogey of despotism. This may indeed prove useful for flattening out the Labour Party and other advocates of "nationalisation"; but our withers are unwrung. The bureaucrats stand or fall with the capitalist class; and, although he would probably not admit it, Mr. Belloc *knows* that so does the Catholic Church! Hence his animosity to Socialism, his mean, Jew-hating sneers at its scientific founder.

The mother of Marx was no immaculate virgin, but the Son of Mary uttered nothing so inspiring as the slogan—"Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win."

E. B.

### A SCIENTIST ON HIS KNEES.

It is no mere incident that Sir Oliver Lodge in the pulpit finds his views in harmony with those age-long superstitions dealt out to the Workers by the Church. That institution has nobly played its part as hand-maid to the Ruling Class. It continues to do so to-day, despite the fact that scientific advance has banished much of their crude stock-in-trade. The science of a former decade found favour with the rising Capitalist Class because of the need to weaken the power of the clergy and aristocracy who hindered their progress and who claimed privilege by divine right. The Capitalist having won complete power, now seeks to convert the scientist into his paid servant in an endeavour to fight his more formidable enemy, the Working Class. It must be made to appear that the religious soporific of an after life has been approved by science. But the scientist in the pay of the Ruling Class need not expound scientific views. The hope is that his assertions will carry weight and preserve some of the ignorance on which the existence of our masters depends. Sir Oliver, as a bogey man, finds difficulties, so he attempts to meet them thus:—

It might be said, and had been said: If the world is ruled by an all-seeing Providence infinitely wise, why pray to have anything changed? . . . But that did not prevent them from asking for help. Could they not ask a friend to help them without interfering with anything. (Sir Oliver Lodge, at St. Bennett's Church, Mile End. Reported, *East London Advertiser*, June 6th, 1925.)

We suggest that the difficulty will be overcome when the workers realise the many

absurdities of a system in which prayer is suggested as a remedy for social evils; when they understand with what ease their efforts could provide comfort and leisure for all if used for that purpose. But the Masters wish the Workers to look upward, away from this earth.

If they found good evidence for a spiritual world let them accept it. . . . The existence of such a world might not appeal to their senses, but all the important things were detected by the mind, and not by the animal senses. (Ibid.)

Note the "ifs," and the "mights," and the subtle inference separating the mind and the senses.

Science has demonstrated that the evolution of the whole cosmic system is one interminable chain of cause and effect working through ascertainable law. Man's place in nature has been established, and the death blow given to Gods and superstition. Physiology shows the dependance of intellectual capacities upon the brain as an organ of thought, like other organs the result of age-long development. Not a shred of evidence can be advanced for the existence of any other life but the present one, for only in life can we have consciousness, and the only things we can be conscious of are the sensations and impressions of the material world around us obtained through the senses. Such knowledge is not for the workers—yet. For them the slightly modified superstitions of their primitive ancestors. After generations of mental distortion facts often cause them mental disturbance, but their only hope lies in the removal of ignorance, political and religious. The scientist, when speaking for his masters, wishes to preserve the attitude of mind conducive to such ignorance; says he:—

They had to approach the subject in the attitude of little children in the presence of wiser and stronger people than themselves. (Ibid.)

The same old story, trust your masters, and allow them and their sycophants to do your thinking for you. As Socialists we do not fight religion as a separate evil, it is only one of the institutions of the present system which, like poverty, crime, disease, and other evils, will depart with that system. Man's power over, and control of, nature's forces will be the end of super-naturalism and the coming of a world in which physical and mental development of the highest order will be the birthright of all.

MAC.

### CONFUSION IN SCOTLAND.

A correspondent sends us the Manifesto of the Scottish Workers' Republican Party, and asks for our opinion of it.

The object of the Party, founded by the late John Maclean, is a Workers' Republic for Scotland.

The Manifesto sets out the slave position of the working class, and urges that the workers must carry through the Social Revolution.

The chief fallacy of their position is their insistence upon a Scottish Workers' Republic. This demand is both reactionary and Utopian. The struggle of the workers of the United Kingdom must be a united one. The workers are under the domination of a class who rule by the use of a political machine which is the chief governing instrument for England, Scotland, Wales, etc. To appeal to the workers of Scotland for a Scottish Workers' Republic is to arouse and foster the narrow spirit of Nationalism, so well used by our masters. Economically the demand is Utopian, as the development of capitalism has made countries more and more dependent on each other, both through the specialisation of industry or agriculture, and also by the force controlled by the Great Powers to suppress or control the smaller nations.

The history of "independent" Hungary, Poland, and the Balkan States shows that the realisation of "political independence" by a country leaves the workers' conditions untouched and actually worsens them in many cases.

The appeal to the worker in this Manifesto to "rally to the cause of a Workers' Republic for Scotland" is made "so that we might win you away from the service of the imperialist gang who direct their activities from London." If the worker is to be won for Socialism, it is by getting him to understand the principles of Socialism, and not by appealing to him to concentrate on Scottish affairs. Socialism is international.

The uselessness of the Manifesto is shown by their anarchist attitude towards Parliament:—

"We claim that no useful working-class purpose can be served by sending men to Parliament."

They advance no arguments to support their claim. They offer no other method. They ignore the fact that the political

machine is the instrument whereby capitalists wield power.

Their simple statement is that the workers can exercise "governmental power" because they are the only necessary class in society.

It is very simple. But what are the obstacles to this necessary class exercising the power of government?

The first obstacle is working-class ignorance, which is used to vote capitalists and their agents into political supremacy.

The second obstacle is the force which is used by the capitalists in control of Parliament to keep the workers in subjection.

The stupidity of preaching that because the workers are necessary to Scotland they can exercise governmental control is to invite the butchery of the workers.

Socialist education demands that besides advocating the establishment of Socialism, the obstacles that stand in its path must be pointed out, in order that the workers can march along the road to their supremacy. This Manifesto does not explain how the workers are kept in slavery, and it offers no road out of it. The meaning of the class struggle has yet to be learned by the Scottish Workers' Republican Party. The Manifesto closes with this gem: "Scotland for the Scottish Workers; the World for the World's Workers"! A. KOHN.

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### A LOOK ROUND.

#### ETHICS OF COMMERCE.

Capitalism produces some vile things. In no other age could the motive arise to adulterate and half poison the very essentials of life as is done to-day. As far back as 1860 an Act was passed for "preventing the adulteration of articles of food and drink," yet the report of the Public Analysts recently published in a blue book admits that adulteration takes place "about the same as in former years." (Report *Morning Advertiser*, Sept. 10, 1925). There is adulterated milk, butter containing washing soda, condensed milk containing lead, copper and tin, and jams dyed by salicylic acid. In one case a sample of "strawberry jam" was found to contain not less than 75 per cent. apple jelly, and not one "whole strawberry." A trader was fined for exposing for sale jam which was described by the prosecution as being indescribably filthy and containing dust, dirt, and straw, and even a small piece of ham bone. Two samples consisting wholly of flavoured maize starch, without any dried egg, were described as "delicious custard." There is even "Glorious Beer" contaminated with lead, arsenic, or an excessive amount of salt. Small wonder that the workers overworked, stifled in slums, and half poisoned, fill early graves in such numbers. Nor are the public authorities immune from suspicion. The very existence of an army of food and drug inspectors is evidence that this form of sophistication is inevitable under Capitalist society:—

The owner of a carcase of meat which no one required locally, decided to send it to a large town. There was no local inspector, but under the regulations, the carcase had to be inspected locally. An inspector of drains and nuisances was sent for to carry out the inspection, although he lived five miles away and admitted that he knew nothing about the work. (Letter from W. S. Stevens to the *Times*, July 22nd, 1925; quoted also *Vegetarian*, August.)

When medical science has said the last word it still remains for the Working Class to establish a sane system of society (Socialism). Only when such a system prevails in which pure food, fresh air, and rational pleasures are the prerogative of all, can the human organism develop powers of resistance to disease, disease which is admitted by all authoritative opinion to be mainly the outcome of unhealthy social conditions.

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RATES AND TAXES.

Probably one of the prejudices most difficult to dislodge from the workers' mind is their concern over Rates and Taxes. The truth regarding this question is obscured by appearances, and discussion is often difficult because most of the workers' thinking is superficial. To remove confusion, these deceptive appearances must first be put aside so that a deeper insight may be obtained. The question is an economic one. Out of the total wealth which the workers alone produce from nature's material—what determines the share that falls to the Working Class and the Capitalists respectively? Rates and taxes have been put on and taken off year in and out. Prices of the necessities of life have likewise varied. Taking a sufficiently lengthy period (say, 20 years) all the variations have been experienced. Have the workers ever gained any real advantage from these variations? Did bonuses help them during the war when they barely covered the already advanced prices? Did the later fall in prices help them? Did not the removal of bonuses and wage adjustments bring conditions roughly to their former state? The answers are all plain ones. Likewise, there have been years of relatively higher or lower rates and taxation but each year end finds the Working Class as they were at its beginning—in poverty. Why? They can produce much more in a given time than is necessary to sustain them for that time, but that "much more" is the property of their masters. The chattel slave of antiquity did likewise, but he was fed and sheltered directly by the slave owner. No one would suggest that he paid the Taxes of the Roman Empire. They were paid out of the wealth which the slaves produced. Where, then, is the difference? It is merely a surface one; though the modern slave receives a wage he can only obtain with it the necessities of life on the average. The exploiting nature of the buying of Labour Power is covered by the deceptive appearance of the money payment. Deluding the workers that they contribute towards taxation is pre-supposing that in some mysterious way they receive more than a subsistence wage. But the Capitalists take ALL the wealth produced and return only that wage, or cost of living. All Capitalist expenditure, therefore, such as the maintenance of criminals, of paupers, and the cost of Poor Law Relief, comes out

of the wealth the workers produce but DO NOT GET. If the workers want proof that these expenses concern the Master Class only, we point to the reform legislation introduced by them that deals with such expenditure; Old Age Pensions, for example. The cost of maintaining aged paupers is less outside than inside institutions. The cost of the Workmen's Compensation Act is less than other forms of maintaining Capital's human wreckage. The Widows' Pensions Bill is further evidence. Introducing this Bill Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to deal with the charge that it would impose an impossible burden on industry:—

Proceeding, he put some considerations on the other side which are to be taken into account in weighing up the advantages and disadvantages. . . . There will be immediate relief of the rates, estimated at about 3 millions a year, which will probably rise until it gets to about 7 millions a year (quoted, *Gleanings and Memoranda*, June).

Thus the paraded philanthropy of Widows' Pensions is found to be a repetition of the Lloyd George Old Age Pension swindle, a device for saving Capitalist rates. Fellow workers, study our position and you will cease being bated by your masters and their agents over matters that haven't the slightest concern for you if you but knew it. Which is the most important, relief for your masters' rates and taxes, or relief from your present slavery and consequent poverty?

\* \* \*

#### NATIONALISATION OR SOCIALISM.

The pet scheme of the I.L.P. and the Labour Party has always been Nationalisation. That they call Socialism and they point to the Post Office as its standing example:—

The Post Office was really the one big Socialist organisation that had been built up in this country. (Vernon Hartshorn, late P.M.G., *Observer*, May 4th, 1924.)

We oppose Nationalisation because we claim and show that it is only a form of Capitalist ownership leaving the workers wage slaves still separated from their means of life and compelled to work for the collective Capitalists under a system of State ownership. The economy effected in the use of human labour power through co-ordination means a decrease in the number of workers required for Capitalist production and distribution. Nationalisation, therefore, means that the workers are still to remain a subject class whilst their conditions will be worsened.

Our alternative is common ownership, which will abolish privately owned wealth and the class subjection which is its outcome. Speaking at Durham Ramsay McDonald said:—"The Labour Party stands for Nationalisation"; but, more important, he said also:--

I should not be doing justice to you or to myself if I told you that Nationalisation was going to get you out of your present difficulties. You know I should be lying if I tried to spoof you in that way. (*Times*, July 27th, 1925.)

So, for 25 and 30 years respectively, the Labour Party and the I.L.P. have been lying and spoofing you because they have told you thousands of times that public ownership or Nationalisation is the only remedy for the social evils from which you suffer. Furthermore, we have always insisted that with even a substantial Labour majority as in Australian Labour Governments, you cannot have Socialism, if such Party has been elected on a mandate merely to administer Capitalism. Such Parties fail because they cannot, even if they wished, force Socialism against the wishes of a Working Class who still cling to Capitalism under some form or other. Again the hypocrite, MacDonald, supplies the evidence though not at election times, that would lose votes:—

Even if they had a revolution they could not create a Socialist state out of it. In building up their state they had to deal with the habits, the prejudices, and the expectations of the people, and when that failed they would be compelled to retreat. (Report of I.L.P. Summer School. *Daily Herald*, August 4th, 1925.)

One of the mental habits of which the Working Class must rid themselves is the expectation that any Government or set of people can achieve their emancipation for them: While the workers place political power in the hands of the Master Class or their decoy Labour agents they will be compelled to retreat again and again: only when through class understanding they elect and control their own Socialist representatives can they go forward with the objective they have in view, the conversion of Capitalist Property to Common Property, the Socialist objective.

\* \* \*

#### 'ORRIBLE NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

Apart from the possibility of establishing Socialism in any isolated country, we have always maintained that a widespread Socialist opinion was impossible in such a country as Russia, where social production, the generating condition for such ideas, had

not even been developed. That did not prevent us from giving the Bolsheviks full credit for their achievements carried through under great difficulties. Likewise, we have consistently refused to pour scorn upon them for failures that were inevitable under the particular conditions prevailing in that country. Many and varied have been the opinions of the Labourites who have visited Russia. Apparently, each sees exactly what he wishes others to believe he has seen. Lansbury went "to see what a Socialist Revolution looks like at close quarters and came back convinced that there is perfect freedom for everybody to worship God." (What I saw in Russia: Lansbury.) The trade unionists find perfect models of trade union organisation and decide to apply their experience to British conditions as soon as they return home. (Visit of W.I.R. Delegation, *Morning Post*, Aug. 18, 1925.) Others profess to see only starvation and misery, while Mrs. Snowden finds the Bolsheviks insulting the great religious figures and decrying religion (*Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 8, 1925). Some may remember the stock bogies of the Capitalists and their agents in the past: the Boer and the white flag, the always drunk and bestial German officers, the alien agitator spreading sedition in "our" country. Mrs. Snowden's pet obsession is:—

One little fellow who rattled off his father's pet Communist speech and demanded that we should go back home and tell the British workman to turn the rich people into the street. (Through Bolshevik Russia, Mrs. Snowden.)

That was in 1920, but another precocious orator appears in 1925:—

One little fellow of 13 or 14 years of age delivered a speech which he had learnt by heart in the language of the Commissars. It was one long tirade against everybody except the proletariat.

On another occasion a little boy said to Mr. Ben Turner: "Why don't you in England kill all the bourgeoisie? In Russia we have killed them." Mr. Turner mildly explained that people in England did not do such things, but the boy turned away in contempt, saying: "It is better that you should kill them." (*Daily Telegraph*, August 8th, 1925.)

Mrs. Snowden thinks such words strange to come from the lips of a little boy. So do I, but not for her reason. Boys of 13 are not in the habit of memorising long political speeches. And there does not appear any language difficulty. No interpreter was, apparently, there, the "little fellow" just turned away uttering his murderous views as he "turned." Perhaps.

Ben understands Russian "mildly," or, being considerate perhaps, the "little fellow" spoke in English. Strange—yes! Such trides apart, however, they enable Mrs. Snowden to prate of "the effects of teaching the hard theories of Bolshevism without the softening influences of Christian Faith, love and justice." Regarding the latter, most people will remember their practical application by the Christian Nations during the years 1914-18. As for the softening process there certainly does seem some evidence. Loosely speaking, we would say that it takes place in the region of the thinking apparatus. MAC.

#### THE HIGHWAYS OF SLAUGHTER.

The daily slaughter of the workers on the railways, in the mine, in fact, throughout industry, has almost become a commonplace. Being a commonplace, it excites little more than passing sympathy, and the usual flood of nauseating Capitalist cant. But a new peril has arisen: "The Slaughter of the Highway."

There were 25,342 street accidents in the metropolitan area of London alone, during the quarter ending June 25th. Fatal injuries were inflicted on 226 people, 191 of them by motor vehicles (quoted, *The Ratepayer*, August). 73 casualties occurred in England and Wales from motor accidents for the week-end September 13-15th, 1925, of which number 26 were killed (*Daily Express*, September 15th 1925).

The above figures only allow a very small estimate of the toll of human life throughout the country, but it might cause the workers to ask a few pertinent questions. Whose is the commercial motor? Is it not the property of the speeding-up-profit-grinder?—whether it be the heavily laden motor-lorry or the traffic grabbing 'bus combine. Whose is the Rolls Royce and the Daimler? Is it not the expensive toy of the class for whose pleasure and profit our class are murdered on the sea, the battlefield, in the mine, and now upon the very streets we walk? Dare their apologists deny it? They cannot without lying. They can only whine lest you realise at long last that the pleasures and the profits of the few are the fruits of your sacrifice in every department of life. Hear them:—

It would be a grievous thing to the life of the road and of the community if hatred of motorists follows in the wake of the daily toll of accidents that are collected by the Press (*Westminster Gazette*, September 21st, 1925.)

Would it? What a grievous thing if the workers realised that the toll of the road, bad as it is, is as nothing to the toll of human misery the Capitalist system engenders for them. The community, indeed (sic). In their sense it is merely the cant word for Capitalist Class. Did that class consult the "community" over that stupendous event, the war? Do you think they will bother about a mere handful of you in comparison with the loss of life that the war was bound to involve? No. Just as in a mining disaster they rush their black coated clerics to the scene lest the tragedy arouse your hatred of them and their hellish system, so their prostitute journalists rush into print in an effort to lull you into the belief that the ever growing motor peril is incidental and passing. But even in their efforts to bluff you they belie themselves as they invariably do in other matters concerning Working Class life. The same writer admits that even after precautions and penalties have been scientifically enforced:—

We shall still have to accept a residuum of yearly accidents as an average. That price must be paid for the boon which motoring has brought, just as a similar price has to be paid for transport by sea, railroad, or air (*Ibid*).

We! To whom has motoring brought the boon? And who are the "we" that must "pay the price"? As Socialists we welcome all means to shorten toil and extend pleasure. But just as the vast improvements in machinery, transport, and scientific methods of producing wealth bring their harvest of disasters and poverty under Capitalist private ownership, so the motor, both commercial and pleasure, in the hands of the Capitalist highwaymen extends the inconveniences and the dangers of your already here-to-day and gone-to-morrow poverty existence. MAC.

#### S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

##### LONDON DISTRICT.

**Sundays:** Leytonstone, "Green Man," 11.30 a.m.  
Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.

**Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.

**Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:** Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to E. Jesper, 74 Murdoch-rd., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., W. Rowney, 43, Paddock St., Hanley, Staffs. Open to all.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.

**MANCHESTER.**—The Sec., 28, Peter St., High-town, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Broad Lane, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## SCIENCE AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

A scientist died the other day while experimenting with gas. The event reminds us of the great amount of work done by numbers of scientists in different directions, and how often such work has brought about the death of those taking part in it, in the effort to control the forces of nature and to weed out disease from amongst us. We are tempted at times to enquire of what use is this vast expenditure of effort to the mass of the world's population. Much talk there is of modern scientific progress, but the question is seldom asked whether this expenditure of effort is worth while, or whether the need for much of the scientific work is due to causes that can be removed.

The position may be looked at from more than one point of view. One may look at the wonderful results of microbe hunting; the fine buildings that have been put up; the marvellous results of the application of electricity to various purposes; the use and abuse of oil; the wonders of steam; and so on, and standing appalled before the feats of the human brain, exclaim, "Yes, indeed, there has been progress, wonderful progress!" On the other hand, one may look at the festering slum; the ill-clad and ill-fed thousands scurrying to work at the sound of the hooter; the lunacies from overwork and the suicides from underwork; the model dwellings that tremble at a blast of wind; the miseries of the poor and the fatuities of the rich; and seeing these things one might murmur, "Is this progress?"

Again, we might ask whether marvellous inventions are of any real service when the bulk of the people cannot take advantage of them; or yet, again, whether discoveries are of any real value when the cause of the evils they deal with can be removed, thereby rendering the discoveries unnecessary.

Generally speaking, all work that involves the training and developing of the faculties has an element of usefulness, but if a similar result can be obtained by employing the faculties on work that is useful to society, then it is foolish to employ them on useless work. For example, the practice of the profession of burglary or company promoting stimulates mental activity and develops considerable manual dexterity, but a similar result could be obtained by taking part in work that was of real use to society.

Now let us examine two aspects of the matter more closely.

Over 90 per cent. of the population of this country does not get more than two weeks' holiday at a time in one year; the majority of this 90 per cent. gets less than a week at a time. The average wage of this 90 per cent. is, at the best, only sufficient to provide the necessities of life and a very modest holiday. This is taking an extremely favourable view of the state of affairs. Imagine, therefore, of what little value to such people is, for instance, the luxuriously appointed ocean-going liner, with its wonderful arrangements to meet every need of the traveller; or the marvellous feats of engineering in the Alps, the Andes or the Himalayas; the remarkable gadgets for the comfort and convenience of the owners of £6,000 motor cars; and hosts of similar marvels that are entirely out of the reach of the teeming populations of industrial areas who make up the bulk of the inhabitants of modern countries. It is interesting to know that at banquets of the wealthy, automatic carriers travel round the table, and guests can pick from them tasty morsels to suit their palates, but the information is of little value to a hungry man with a fat appetite and a lean pocket.

Thousands upon thousands of pounds have been expended, and investigators have used up a large part of their lives in the hunt for the microbes that are said to cause such diseases as consumption, typhoid fever, smallpox, and the like. If everybody lived in sanitary dwellings, worked under healthy conditions, ate unadulterated food, and got plenty of fresh air, the bulk of the illnesses would disappear. Flour, jam, and other things are produced for gain, and the goodness of the article is sacrificed for the gainful end. Cheapness of production is thought more of than good quality. If buying and selling were abolished profit would cease to be the incentive for production, and there would be no inducement to produce objects that are of inferior quality and harmful to the consumers.

Substitutes are produced instead of good quality articles for the same reason that food is adulterated.

The wage the average worker receives is small, and the housewife, or family buyer, is compelled to look for things that are cheap. Hence adulterated goods and cheap substitutes are purchased instead of the healthier, more nourishing, and better-quality articles. Much ingenuity is used, and many and wonderful are the inventions in the effort to provide such substitutes. At the moment of writing the papers report the formation of a company for the purpose of producing woolalose, as a substitute for wool. It is composed of 70 per cent. jute and 30 per cent. ordinary recovered wool. If there were a shortage of wool, then the production of a substitute would be a sensible procedure. But there is no shortage of wool, and the sole reason for the production of woolalose is the desire to obtain a cheap substitute that will allow of a good profit to the company and yet be within the purchasing power of those whose purses will not help them to reach the genuine article.

This business of substitutes and shoddy runs right through the heart of present-day society. Investigations have produced startling information of the wonderful things introduced into even the commonest articles to make their sale more profitable. Jam and bread are typical examples.

But rain falls on the innocent as well as on the guilty. The effects of adulteration are sometimes felt by the rich as well as the poor. A guide-book to Switzerland, giving

advice to tourists, contains the following remarks on wines:—

Travellers to France are generally advised when they drink *vin ordinaire* to take the white wine by preference, as from its colour it is less likely to be the subject of adulteration. In Switzerland, however, the adulterator shows great impartiality for colour, and exercises his craft with great liberality and fairness. Plaster of Paris is the principal ingredient, and Swiss wines have hitherto been largely plastered. With us plaster of Paris is used rather by confectioners than by wine merchants, and constitutes the principal adulteration for comfits and all opaque sweeties. The plaster of Paris is cheaper than sugar and does duty for it.—(J. E. M., "Guide to Switzerland." Introduction.)

The baneful effects of Plaster of Paris on the human constitution do not need pointing out.

The same writer sent samples of Swiss honey and genuine honey to an analyst for examination. The result showed that the genuine honey contained only 0.94 of cane sugar, whilst the Swiss article contained 30.27 of cane sugar, thus proving that Swiss honey was a manufactured article, and the bees were innocent of the crime.

These illustrations show the lengths to which modern producers will go when putting on the market an article that is produced mainly for sale, and also that the rich are not always sure of being exempt from the evil effects of the system that allows them to accumulate wealth.

The Executive Council of the Food Committee recently reported having had evidence given them that paper-bag manufacturers were being asked for heavier sugar bags, and that when sugar was weighed in these bags the retailers could afford to sell sugar at cost price and make their profit on the bags! ("Daily News," 16. 10. 25.)

These are the kind of things that have accompanied the advance of society, and they are the result of much time and ingenuity being spent in fighting preventable diseases, producing makeshift goods, and deceiving people with poisonous products and faulty measures. Are they signs of progress? They each have their source in the same central fact, the modern private ownership of the means of wealth production, with all that such ownership involves.

Taking this as one test of progress, compare modern times with the Middle Ages, swathed in mediæval darkness. The peasant and the guildworker produced articles that were at least genuine and free of adultera-

tion. Progress, in this direction anyhow, would appear to have headed backwards nowadays. In spite of the development of sanitation we have little to boast of on the score of disease. Whilst cholera and similar epidemics ravaged the Middle Ages, we are still in the grip of epidemics, as the statistics of smallpox, influenza and syphilis bear eloquent witness.

The problems of disease, shoddy goods, and the like are economic problems. They can only be solved and real progress made when the central economic problem has been solved. Disease and shoddy goods are bound up with poverty, each flows from the same cause. When the cause of poverty has been abolished the effects will cease to exist.

Under the heading "A Puzzle for Progress" the "Observer" (16. 8. 25.) printed an article on some slums in Limehouse, the surroundings of which are described as "a soaring temple of gasometers, a railway embankment, and a dead-cat kind of canal."

The slum consists of 9½ acres, which the Stepney Council has condemned as insanitary. The suggestion to clear the slum has been met by a storm of protest from the occupants. The following description is suggestive of the elevating nature of the circumstances:—

A century and a half ago fish-curing started there; to-day there are half-a-dozen curing yards in the area supporting, directly and indirectly, probably not far short of a hundred families. The sheds are, literally, in the backyards of some of the houses. In the evening, when stoking-up for the night is going on, you may stand at your back door under a gas attack of acrid deal and oak sawdust fumes, with haddocks hanging before you all arow.

Plenty of examples parallel to this can be found in dozens of other localities. The description continues with these words: "It may not be ozone, but at least it is livelihood." There is the crux of the problem. Against the matter of livelihood and low wages sanitary attacks and town-planning schemes are constantly collapsing. Slums are cleared from one locality only to rise and flourish in another. Ideal cottages are built, and look very pretty and inviting until the lodgers in every room convert them into poverty-stricken hovels and withered flowers of slumdom.

We see then that the bulwarks of misery are profit-making, poverty and ignorance. These three in turn bring forth shoddy goods, overwork, disease, and the multitude of other ills that flourish to-day. But profit-

making, poverty, and ignorance are themselves the product of the present private property basis of society. To attempt to deal with present evils by part amelioration instead of striking the root of the trouble, and to claim the result achieved as evidence of progress is hypocrisy, the shoddy product of an essentially shoddy society.

People will be free of disease when they can afford to live in well-built, hygienic houses in healthy surroundings, and work under sanitary conditions with plenty of leisure for healthy exercise and rest; they will be free of shoddy goods when the aim of production is to provide the whole of the members of society equally with articles of consumption and adornment that are of the best quality obtainable. They will be free of ignorance when they have leisure to learn and access to the best existing sources of knowledge; and they will be free of poverty when the means of wealth production are owned by society as a whole and operated for the equal benefit of all.

All the scientific progress of ages will be of little advantage to the majority of the world's population unless and until the barriers of capitalist private property are removed and the need for the microbe-hunter vanishes.

It has been said by a philosopher, whose name I have forgotten, that the progress of a society should be judged by the health and the happiness of the men, women and children composing the society. Judged by this standard, the progress of capitalist society is a sham that conceals a weltering mass of misery. Yet it need not be so. There has been a tremendous technical development that enlarges the capacities of modern production to an extent that makes easy the provision of what is necessary to meet the economic needs of all. Once the bulwarks are broken down the forces that exist will be released and the progress of the mass of the population become a reality instead of a fiction.

GILMAC.

**A discussion class will be held every alternate Thursday Evening (from Oct. 8th, 1925), at 167, Romford Road, Stratford, E.15, at 8 p.m. An appeal is made to members of the public to attend and take part in the discussion.**

## FIFTY YEARS OF "PROGRESS"!

### THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE WORKERS.

We have been asked to make a comparison between the present economic position of the working class and their position fifty years ago. Many considerations besides that of space compel us to confine the comparison within fairly narrow limits, and the complexity of the subject, added to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient authoritative statistics, makes it inevitable that the treatment shall be inadequate in many directions for more than a rough approximation to the actual facts. We shall be concerned mainly with the position of workers in this country except where light can be thrown on the general tendencies of advanced capitalism by bringing in illustrations from countries other than Great Britain. It will be desirable at the outset to indicate the numerous difficulties in the way of a full presentation. Statistics are necessarily incomplete even where they do exist, while large parts of our subject are not covered by reliable figures at all. Apart from this it is by no means easy to find even a satisfactory basis of comparison.

#### WHAT YOUR WAGES WILL BUY.

Mere changes in money wages mean little indeed. Correction must be made for changing prices, for increases or decreases in hours of work and holidays, for changing customs as to payment for wet weather and for "walking time," and as to special bonuses like "harvest money" and allowances in kind, and above all, for the increasing intensity of work. It is plainly not sufficient to say that the American workers get higher real wages than those in Europe, unless allowance is made for the fact that the former have often to work much harder than the latter.

We have to allow also for the effect of increasing unemployment on the worker's standard of living; the hourly rate of wages may show a marked increase, which is, however, more than offset by a reduction in the time of work owing to unemployment. Again, the habits prevalent in 1870 differ considerably from those of 1925. Foods, clothing, recreations have all altered, travelling expenses have to be added to the budget of most wage earners, deductions for

health and unemployment insurance need to be reckoned; these and innumerable other favourable or unfavourable changes, some small and some great, have all to be taken into account in any comparison between one period and another nearly two generations later.

#### DIFFERENT STANDARDS OF COMPARISON.

There is a further cause of confusion which has to be kept clearly in mind. This has to do with the object of the comparison and the deliberate choice of factors on which to base it. We can say, for instance, that the workers in 1925 are able to purchase with their wages smaller quantities of food, clothing, etc., than they could in 1870, and that they are therefore worse off. This is one way of making a comparison, or we could say that out of the total wealth produced in one year the workers received a smaller *proportion* than in some previous year. Again, in this instance, we should be correct in describing the workers as worse off, but it should be noted that this means something essentially different from the first statement. It might take place in spite of the fact that real wages were rising; it is a comparison of the position of the workers with that of the non-workers.

Thirdly, we might introduce into our enquiry the development of the powers of production in a somewhat different way. It is, for instance, undeniable that our powers of production in 1925 are enormously greater than in 1875, yet pauperism due to unemployment has also grown. The productive powers are in fact not being used owing to the defective organisation which accompanies capitalism. Here, again, and in a third distinct sense, it could be said that the workers were worse off because of their greater degradation and dependence on the propertied class.

As we are to take as our starting point the years between 1870 and 1880, let us first consider what was the position then.

#### THE POSITION IN 1870.

It just happens that about that year the workers in this country were in a comparatively favourable situation. From 1846 to 1873 there was a phenomenal expansion of

production and of foreign trade. Although prices were rising, the demand for labour caused wages to rise even faster. British exports which in 1855-59 averaged only £116,000,000, had by 1873 risen to £255,000,000; and between those dates the improvement in the worker's standard of living was considerable, and more or less continuous. (See A. L. Bowley, appendix to "Dictionary of Political Economy," p. 801). Sir William Beveridge ("Economic Journal," December, 1923), estimates the increase in "real" wages in the ten years preceding 1870 to be no less than 12 per cent.

At the same time unemployment was at a very low level. While the ten-yearly average of unemployment among trade unionists was 5.2 from 1851 to 1870, the average for the next decade fell to 3.8, while in 1872 it was only .9 per cent., which is the lowest point it touched during the century (Bowley Elementary Manual of Statistics, p. 156).

On the other hand, the number of persons in receipt of poor-law relief averaged 31 per 1,000 for the years 1871-1879, a high level not reached again until quite recently (The Poor Laws: J. J. Clarke, p. 139.)

There is therefore no reasonable ground to doubt that, on the whole, the workers were much better off in 1870 than they had been during the prolonged depression after 1815 or in the 'forties.

#### THE MOVEMENT OF WAGES BETWEEN 1870 AND 1900.

In 1873 a great change came over the scene. Trade depression set in, prices fell, business failures mounted rapidly and unemployment rose continuously year by year until in 1879 it reached 11.4 per cent. It declined to 2.3 per cent. in 1882, rose again to 10.2 per cent. in 1886, and averaged 5.6 per cent. during the 'eighties, and 4.4 per cent. during the 'nineties (Bowley: Manual, p. 156). Although prices were, with slight fluctuations, falling from 1873 right up to 1897, wages fell too, owing to the pressure of unemployment. Nevertheless, those workers who had more or less regular employment (after a period of 6 years to 1879 during which "real" wages were nearly stationary), again enjoyed a long period of general improvement which lasted to 1900 ("Manual," 148).

Sir William Beveridge (Economic Jour-

nal, December, 1923) estimates the percentage increase of "real" wages over the thirty years from 1870 to 1900 at approximately 50 per cent. From 1897 the downward movement of prices was reversed, and factors causing prices to rise have been continuous right up to date. During the war years and immediately afterwards, abnormal conditions led to a great acceleration of the upward movement, but while these conditions have now practically ceased to operate, the more permanent movement has continued, and presumably would have had its effect had there been no war. Wages, as is usual during such periods, did not keep pace with prices. Bowley considers that the purchasing power of wages was declining from 1900-1910, and possibly stationary from 1910 to the outbreak of war. Sir William Beveridge estimates "real" wages to have been at best stationary over the period. According to the Board of Trade "Report on Changes in Rates of Wages, etc." (1913, Cd. 7080) prices rose by 13.7 per cent. from 1905 to 1912, whereas wages rose only between 2 per cent. and 5½ per cent. Leaving aside the period of the war when other complicated factors make comparison still more difficult, we come to the present year. It is worth while noting here that it is habitual to compare the position now with what it was in 1914. Thus, the International Labour Office (see Ministry of Labour Gazette, June, 1925, p. 217) describes the present "real" wages of the British worker as being just a shade (1 per cent.) better than in 1914. This, however, obscures the important fact that wages in 1914 were at a level reached after 14 years more or less steady decline. A comparison with 1900 would give an opposite and materially different result.

Sir Leo Chiozza Money (People's Year Book, 1924) writes as follows:—

In the middle of 1923 it is probably true that a considerable proportion of wage earners are earning less, money's worth for money's worth, than they did in 1913.

This guarded statement serves to correct the optimism of the International Labour Office, for they found that "real" wages have not risen but have slightly fallen since 1923.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT SINCE 1900.

The degree of unemployment is sufficiently illustrated by the following yearly

average percentages among trade unionists. The years selected are the series of highest and lowest years from 1900—

1900	...	...	2.5 per cent.
1901	...	...	6 "
1906	...	...	3.6 "
1908	...	...	7.8 "
1913	...	...	2.1 "
1914	...	...	3.3 "
1916	...	...	0.4 "
1922	...	...	15.4 "

At present the percentage is about 11. Since 1920 the degree of unemployment has been greater than at any time before the war, and the depression has lingered without any signs of lifting; as has been candidly admitted by Dr. Macnamara, M.P. ("The Times," September 11th, 1923) the permanent unemployed army in this country can be anticipated to remain at a level

three or four times as big as in pre-war times. . . . In those days . . . in times of trade prosperity, there were always, at best, round about 200,000 persons out of regular employment.

The effect of this unemployment on the workers' standard of living must not be overlooked. As was pointed out above, it is one thing to say that the *rate* of wages in 1925 for an *employed* man is equal to that in 1914; it is quite another thing to say that the workers as a whole receive during a year a "real" wage as large as before. If the loss of time due to unemployment is equal to three months each year, then the "rate" of wages requires to be reduced by 25 per cent. to show the real position. A useful attempt in this direction has been made by the Labour Research Department (L.R.D. Monthly Circu'ar, October, 1925. Their conclusions are published in pamphlet form.)

#### THE POSITION IN 1925.

By combining the yearly figures of rates of wages with the percentages of unemployment, and making a correction on account of the movement of retail prices of food (full cost of living figures are unobtainable for pre-war years) a result is obtained which shows approximately what "real" wages were worth from year to year after allowing for loss of time through unemployment. The table is given in full for the 23 years to 1923, accepting 1900 as a base year represented by 100:—

1900	...100	1908	... 89.8	1916	... 69.9
1901	... 97.8	1909	... 88.2	1917	... 62.0
1902	... 95.3	1910	... 88.2	1918	... 78.2
1903	... 92.5	1911	... 91.8	1919	... 93.2
1904	... 91.3	1912	... 89.7	1920	... 92.4
1905	... 92.4	1913	... 93.1	1921	... 94.6
1906	... 95.7	1914	... 90.7	1922	... 81.2
1907	... 95.1	1915	... 82.1	1923	... 81.3

It will be seen from this that the decline over the period of a quarter of a century to this year is nearly 20 per cent. There is, of course, one other small factor to be allowed for in recent years, that is, the effect of unemployment insurance. According to the L.R. Dept., however, the total amount paid out between November, 1920, and June, 1922 (less the workers' own contributions) averaged less than 1/2 per week for insured persons.

#### THE GROWTH OF PAUPERISM.

The result of lower "real" wages and greater unemployment is a striking increase in pauperism. Unable to accumulate savings the worker is forced to go to the Poor Law authorities for meagre protection against one of the effects of capitalist ownership and production.

The number and percentage (in relation to growing population) had been declining from 1870 to about 1890, but an increase then began. According to the 12th Abstract of Labour Statistics (Board of Trade)—

On every day throughout the year 1892 the average number of persons in receipt of Poor Relief was 953,719, this number rising steadily each year with but slight fluctuations to 1,103,724 in 1906, being an increase not only in the number but also relatively to the increase of population.

It was this state of affairs which led Mr. Lloyd George to assert in a speech in Park Hall, Cardiff (December 29th, 1911), that

To-day you have greater poverty in the aggregate in the land than you have ever had. . . . You have a more severe economic bondage than you probably ever had . . . that condition of things was foreign to the barbaric régime of the darker ages.

Yet, despite the Old Age Pension scheme designed by Mr. George with the object of relieving the pressure on the Poor Law institutions and finances, it was not until the exceptional conditions of the war that the number of persons relieved (which was 694,036 in 1883) fell below 600,000. At June 30th, 1921, the number was 1,299,086, and in 1922 1,769,387, representing more than 45 per 1,000 of the population, as against 31 between 1871 and 1879.

In October (1921) returns show the highest number of persons dependent on Poor Law relief since records were kept, namely, a period of 72 years. . . . The growth of expenditure . . . reaching in 1920 by far the highest level in our history. —("British Trades Union Review," January, 1922.)

In August, 1925, the number was 41 per 1,000 (see Ministry of Health Quarterly Report on Poor Law Relief). H.

(To be continued.)

#### THE IDEALISTS!

All that is vile in politics is well represented in the Labour Party. The grasping after fat jobs; the petty bickering over positions of influence; and the changing of ideas and programmes to suit the political weather.

Those who in opposition foam and froth over disarmament, when in office pushed forward a programme of Naval and Air Force development. Those who proclaim the rights of small nationalities, when they had their chance to fulfil their promises met the claims of Indians, Egyptians and others with threats of force and cargoes of bombs.

Based mainly upon the single idea of personal advancement, what else can be expected of these "Leaders of Labour"?

Ramsay MacDonald, J. R. Clynes, J. H. Thomas, vie with one another at pleasant social functions as to which can talk in the most honied tone calculated not to disturb the wealthy host who provide the tempting repasts.

They preach little homilies to the workers on the merit of working hard for the employers and giving them a square deal; they boost Wembley and parade their sound adherence to all the capitalist doctrines of Empire, they ape the manners and the conceits of the ruling class, who in private laugh at them for their folly.

Dinners and social functions take up a great part of the time and energy of the more prominent Labour members.

Mouthers of windy and empty phrases; accomplished diners-out; settlers of strikes—with honours to the employers; trimmers of sails to suit political winds—for the securing of pelf and place; such are the crew the votes of the working class and the permission of the employers have placed at the political helm.

And yet, what self-sacrifice on the part of the rank and file has taken place to push

these self-seekers into affluence! What a desire for improvement has backed these efforts whose fruition is barrenness!

The workers allow high wages (or salaries!) to be paid to these industrial and political bigwigs and thus make the jobs attractive and an inducement to the unprincipled adventurers. Those who are on the look-out for a career in which they can climb see such a career in these movements; and a career, moreover, that is easier than in ordinary business—brass, wind, and unscrupulousness being the main qualifications required. The "intellectuals" find an easy opening and crawl in and up.

The history of the "labour" movement the world over is to a great extent the history of sacrifice by the workers and betrayal by the "intellectuals."

Finally, is it necessary to attend gorgeous functions and to be tricked out in knee breeches in order to help on the emancipation of the working class? GILMAC.

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**The Socialist Standard,**

NOV.,



1925

**THE REAL MEANING OF REVOLUTION.**

False ideas about Revolution are being spread by every agency of reaction and confusion. The open defenders of capitalism as well as the so-called Labour Parties are active in distorting the meaning of Revolution. Flaring headlines in the press speak of the advocacy of violence as Revolution, whereas in most cases the advocates as well as the users of violence are the defenders of property. In "respectable" Labour circles the "right honourables" talk of bloodshed and revolution as interchangeable terms, thus soothing their followers in the belief that revolution is something horrible and chaotic as opposed to the quiet and peaceful policy of capitalism and reform.

These votaries of brotherly love ignore the fact that force and butchery have always been a part of the reign of private property. In war and in so-called peace times the property-owning class have never hesitated to use force to gain their ends. In fact, violence has often been promoted in the workers' ranks by agents of capital to make the butchery or defeat of the workers easier. Labour Governments, too, have been active the world over in threatening and using force against the workers. The record of Labour Governments in Germany and elsewhere is clear evidence of this.

Hence the talk about revolution meaning violence is pure hypocrisy amongst the supporters and reformers of capitalism.

While stupid anarchists and direct actionists have also talked about force, the fact remains that those who seek to replace Capitalism by Socialism do not play the capitalist game of advocating violence.

Force and violence are not Revolution. Revolution to a Socialist means the complete change from Capitalism to Socialism achieved by the control of political power by an organised and informed working class. Not a rebellion of a section of workers; not a general strike for higher wages; not a seizure of government by a few intent on dictatorship, but an organised action on the part of the majority of the workers who see the necessity of becoming politically supreme in order to transform the economic system. The revolution is made necessary by economic development, and it can only be successful if the working class understands the Socialist position. Therefore the educational work of the S.P.G.B.

**CANDID CONFESSION.**

Sir William Joynson-Hicks is a politician who frequently embarrasses his own party and class by making indiscreet disclosures of things which a ruling class finds it better to act upon than to talk about. The following extract from a speech on Empire is quoted by A. G. Gardiner in the *Daily News* (October 17th, 1925):—

We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know it is said at missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it. ("Shame.") Call it shame if you like. I am stating facts. I am interested in missionary work in India, and have done much work of that kind, but I am not such a hypocrite as to say that we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS FUND.**

Donations are still invited for the above fund. Our new pamphlet on Socialism is now being printed and will be ready very shortly.

A full list of acknowledgments to this fund to date will appear in next issue.

**WAGES.****WHAT IS THE WORKING CLASS?**

The great majority of the population have no property. They have no means of living except by working for others. They must seek out a master. They must find owners of factories, mines, farms, etc., willing to employ them.

The working class is that body of the population which does not possess wealth, and are therefore forced to work for employers in order to live.

They must get permission from the owners of raw materials, machines, etc., to enter the factories and begin work.

The working class can offer for sale only one thing—their ability to labour. They have no other possession to sell except the energy in their bodies. That force of muscle, nerve and brain is their power to labour.

When a member of the working class goes out to seek a job he finds others like himself equally anxious for work.

**WHO ARE THE PRODUCERS?**

The employers need workers to produce things which can be sold. There is only one way to make these things and that is to apply the energy of the workers to the raw materials of nature. By altering the size, shape and place of raw materials, wealth is produced in its many forms, such as we see around us. Only one class does this work, and so we know that the wealth of the modern world is the product of working-class labour.

The employers, therefore, must hire workers. They may be hired by the day, week, month, etc. They will receive a certain sum of money called a wage. This is the price of the power of mind and body they sell to the employer.

**THE WORKERS' COMMODITY.**

The perishable nature of the workers' power to labour drives them to accept the terms of some employer or other. This labour force of the worker is like any other article of merchandise. It is offered for sale on the market. The labour market is like the meat market or wheat or egg market. The articles offered for sale have a price, which changes from day to day. Labour power varies in price according to the supply available and the demand for it from the buyers—the employers. If there are more wage workers seeking jobs than are needed by the masters, the price of

labour power—wages—will fall. If there are few workers and many jobs, the price of labour power will tend to rise.

But, unlike most other articles for sale, labour power cannot be put on the shelf until a buyer is willing to pay the price asked. A chair can be stored, but labour power will suffer loss of vigour if the necessary nourishment is not obtained, and will cease entirely if the body receives no food or warmth.

**REAL WAGES AND NOMINAL WAGES.**

The wage is the money name for the working power of the individual. It may be 5 dollars per day, in Winnipeg or three pounds per week in London. It may be 10s. a day at one time in London and 15s. a day at another time. This price or money name for the use of the flesh and blood of the worker is just the nominal wage. The real wage is what the money wage will buy. The worker may find that his 10s. daily wage to-day will buy less than his 5s. formerly did. How much of the necessities of life the wage will purchase is, therefore, the real test that decides what the money wage is worth.

**WHAT IS LABOUR POWER?**

The wage worker does not sell the work he performs. He is not in a position to sell that. He does not own the work or labour he puts into the raw materials supplied by the employer. Immediately the worker begins to work in the shop he gives up to the employer his labour. He cannot claim any of his work. His labour no longer belongs to him. The wage, therefore, is not the price of the labour or work performed by the wage earner. The wage is the price of his capacity or ability to work. This is properly called labour power. For a certain wage he places this labour power at the employer's disposal for a certain time. He uses his muscle, brain, and nerves to make raw materials more valuable by fashioning them to the useful forms required.

**WHAT DETERMINES WAGES?**

How are these wages regulated? What decides the price of labour power? The competition in the labour market only decides the changes in the price. These ups and downs in a worker's wage centre round a certain figure. This real wage or price of labour power is decided just as the price of all commodities are determined

—by the cost of production. The labour power of the worker is the power to use the body and mind, and is therefore inseparable from him. The cost of production of the worker's labour power is the cost of producing the things necessary to his existence and with which he maintains himself.

The cost of production of labour power is the cost of the food, clothing, shelter, fuel, etc., upon which the worker depends for his life. It also covers the cost of bringing up his children to replace him in the labour market and secure a new generation of wage workers. It includes also the cost of the training of the "skilled" worker to cover the expense involved in the greater time needed to produce the skilled ability.

#### THE COST OF LIVING BASIS.

The money wages are different in different countries and cities and differ in one place from time to time. But all over the world the real wage of the worker, the buying power of the money wages, is based upon the cost of living. What it costs the worker to live, according to the accepted standard of living, will be the average wage. That is true of the workers whose standard of living is based upon a rice diet and is equally true of the workers here whose activity demands other food. That is why leading employers are pointing out to the workers of Britain that they must lower their standard of living in order to compete with France and Germany. This artful plea is an attempt on "patriotic" grounds to get the workers to accept less wages.

#### PAID AND UNPAID LABOUR.

The worker generally receives the value of his labour power. Its value being the time necessary to produce the necessities of life to live upon while he works. But the worker produces a greater value than that represented by his wages. If he works eight hours per day, part of the time he will be replacing for the employer the wages he receives and most part of the time he will be performing labour for which he receives nothing. This unpaid labour is the surplus taken by the employer and is commonly called profit.

Whether you work in a private concern or for a nationally owned enterprise you will find the above to be the position of the wage workers.

#### THE RELATIVE WAGE.

Wages, therefore, represent only a portion of the wealth produced by the worker. If you compare the part paid in wages and the surplus taken by the employers, you can see the relation between the worker's "share" and the total product. The proportion between them shows what the relative wage is, that is to say, what relation the wages of the working class bears to the total wealth produced by them.

Due to the introduction of machinery, the application of science to industry, more scientific shop management, speeding up, piece-work, and other methods, the "share" of the worker gets less and his relative wage falls. These same causes result in rendering "skilled" workers more and more unnecessary. The war showed how quickly "mechanics" could be made, and so the worker tends to become a machine-minder and no longer does his wage include the cost of the training of the skilled worker.

#### HOW THE WORKERS' "SHARE" IS REDUCED.

Women and even children are continually used to displace men, and along with the greater use of machinery and weeding out of the less efficient, the competition for jobs grows greater and wage cutting becomes easy. The army of unemployed outside is used by the employer to reduce the wages of those inside, and so fear of being workless causes the workers to submit to wage reductions and to sign agreements. The workers have little choice. They do not enter into a free contract, for the menace of starvation for themselves and others prevents free bargaining. The wage contract is not an agreement between equals. It is a penalty enforced upon a propertyless worker by a propertied employer.

#### THE CEASELESS STRUGGLE.

Combination amongst workers is necessary and useful in the constant struggles of the workers. But most of these fights are attempts to make the worker's wage cover the increased cost of living.

A wage is a badge of servitude and while the wage system remains the employers will act as they do to-day. They will use their wealth and political power to ensure the subjection of the worker and the smallness of his "share." The unions are trying to effect changes in wages, but not the abolition of the wages system. Even higher wages and shorter hours result in speeding

up the workers more and the use of more and better machinery and the careful selection of the most efficient workers, so that the employers are compensated for the increased wages by greater output. The wage is the price of a commodity possessed by the worker, and in selling his labour power to the master the worker is really selling himself piecemeal.

His great trouble just now is that many employers won't buy the workers' "one ewe lamb"—his ability to work.

A. KOHN.

### SOCIALISM IS NOT CHRISTIANITY.

"Socialism is Christianity," by John Shelburne. 2d., post free, from the Author, at 6, Marlboro' Hill, Harrow.

This is a pitiful pamphlet. It contains more confused thought and more misunderstanding of Socialism, of history and of the economics of capitalism than one would have thought possible in 16 pages. The author's contentions are simple ones:—"Socialism is Christianity"—"Christianity is love"—and "By love we can achieve all." Mr. Shelburne is in ecstasy over his discovery of this solvent for all problems, but, sadly enough, after he has yearned and dithered soulfully about Love for 15 pages, he has to confess that there is one thing he cannot achieve. To his question, "What is Love?" he can only answer enigmatically with another question, "Who can define it?" Not Mr. Shelburne, at any rate.

But we can leave this stuff and get down to the real purpose of the pamphlet—the defence of exploitation and a plea for its continuance. We are asked to look upon the question of the ownership of wealth as a "secondary purpose" (page 13), not to let ourselves be confused by such "subsidiary issues," but to "Look with visionary eyes into the far distances" (page 16).

Rewards for following this course of action will duly be distributed:—for the workers the "Peace which passeth understanding," and for the capitalist class "the current rate of interest" on their investments.

He is a Labour man, writing for Labour Party branches, and naturally, therefore, he is an advocate of that form of capitalism known as nationalisation. At present the

capitalists live on the dividends resulting from investments. Mr. Shelburne will allow them to go on living without working, that is, living at the expense of the wealth producers, provided only that they submit to the epoch-making innovation of calling their profits "interest" instead of "dividends." He proposes that the Government shall "use their capital . . . paying the shareholders interest according to the state of the money market" (page 10). Capitalists will invest their money in "Government and Municipal stocks and bonds," which "is justified as it receives the current rate of interest" (page 9).

Mr. Shelburne is enthusiastic about the late "Labour" Government, but omits to complete the picture of this party of "simple," "innocent," "pure," "true," and "beautiful" walkers on "the heights of love."

He does not mention Mr. C. G. Ammon, Christian and pacifist, defending the flogging of boys in the Navy, or the Labour Cabinet permitting repeated shooting at strikers in India, or ordering bombing expeditions on Irak tribesmen.

But when a man has one "visionary eye" fixed on the "far distances" and the other on the "state of the money market" and the "current rate of interest," he cannot be expected to see everything. H.

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Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Engels. 3/6, limp 1/6. Postage extra.

## A DISH OF TRIPE.

SELECTED FROM "LANSBURY'S WEEKLY."

Although the dictionary does not mention it, there are two kinds of tripe. One is an article of food prepared from the stomachs of ruminant animals. Cooked in milk and seasoned to taste, it forms a light and nutritious meal—for those who like it. The other tripe is a euphemistic expression applied generally to soft and sloppy utterances, or expressions of unusually foolish opinions. Take *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, for instance. When we say "take" it, we speak figuratively. Refrain from so doing if you doubt your ability to distinguish tripe from treacle. Only a particularly vindictive newsagent would deliver it in mistake for a newspaper. We have done him no harm that we remember. Fortunately he relented after the one deadly stroke and we have seen no more since the issue of September 26th.

The cover and get up are strongly suggestive of that other organ of culture, *John Bull*. The same buff cover, with a shockingly drawn carpenter holding a flag of some sort, instead of the tun-bellied, pugnacious dog-fancier who adorns the rival journal. Inside we find the same flamboyant headlines, the same "open letters" to selected public officials, many of the same advertisements, the same type, and the same printers. The reading is different, naturally, as a separate twopence is required for each journal. You may judge if the twopence would not be better spent on an ice-wafer after sampling the following spoonfuls. They are as typical as spoonfuls of such a dish can be.

Problems of Real Life are answered by "Martha." They make one sigh for an "unreal" life, whatever that state might be. These are the problems that are racking the revolutionary readers of *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*. Need an illegitimate child produce a detailed birth-certificate when obtaining a job? X.Y.Z. asks if she is still legally married after having given the wrong age. Answer: "Forget all about it and go and see your mother." A Comrade writes that because he has not matriculated he cannot become a Sanitary Inspector. "Another example of Tory unfairness," he says. "Not at all," says "Martha," "read Jack London's books." H.T.C., a miner, is horribly fed up with coal getting,

writes poetry, and wonders if he will ever get out of the mine. "Yes," says "Martha," "you won't stay in your mine. I think you will write some day. . . I have a suit in good condition that would fit a very big man. Send me a p.c. if you think you would fit it." Another Comrade who has just married a man with four children, is appalled at the amount of food they eat. Answer: "Martha" knows that workers have more right to sirloins of the roast beef of old England than shirkers, but they simply can't afford it. "Make good, nourishing stews," says "Martha." And suet pudding. It certainly has a "filling" effect. Lastly, we come to "Morning Sickness." "Several husbands have written about this subject, saying how it distressed them." Ye gods! Husbands with morning sickness. We have heard some in the Labour movement referred to as "old woman," but never in our wildest dreams guessed it was so literally true. It is a painful subject, though, physiologically interesting. Let us hurry to *Lansbury's Editorial*. He is pleased to inform his readers the number contains "two articles by myself. The second one you owe to the fact that on two Sunday evenings I sat at the feet of Dr. Annie Besant." He does not say whether she stroked him or patted his head. The article itself is redolent of its origin. He should be old enough to know that no good writing is possible sitting at someone else's feet. Seated, more rationally, at a table or desk, the blood gets a chance to flow to all parts of the body without hindrance, and may possibly even reach the brain. No one with a properly functioning cerebrum would pen such unqualified flatulence as "for me there is no better teaching than that we can all learn from the prophets and seers of all the ages"; or, "Our great Movement . . . sometimes appears like a flock of sheep without a shepherd." The other article, "Empire Trade" (in big letters on a background of soldiers, black men, colonists, and bales of goods), almost defies analysis. If we give it its true name we shall have to quote samples: and our space has some value, anyway.

There is the usual advertisement in Labour journals recently of the Co-operative Investment Trust, a company in which Emil Davies, the *New Statesman's* financial tipster, is the guiding light. Dr. Williams'

Pink Pills find the "comrades" fruitful soil, as likewise does Sister Smith with her Massagene. The mind of the eager reader is safeguarded from congestion consequent on the high informative tone of the paper, by two very diverting tales—illustrated. Each of the illustrations depicts that dignified and ennobling spectacle, one man smashing another on the jaw. This should attract readers in great numbers, especially from those high-brow centres of classic learning where jaw-smashing is a regular nightly entertainment. You will be glad to learn that the first jaw-smasher eventually got the other man's job, whilst the second face-batterer participated in a purse of £2,440. As Annie Besant is quoted: "There can be no peace, no real content without religion." It is uplifting stuff.

Then Mrs. Leonora Eyles lets herself go on that well-tryed topic: the slums. She has made some astonishing discoveries in the Potteries. There, one learns, there are slum houses, but no slum people. "Their Nonconformist consciences have kept them rigidly respectable and God-fearing as far as their homes go. Yet at the same time the illegitimate birth-rate is well above the average." . . . One notes that the Nonconformist conscience is much like the ordinary conscience, and does not extend below the equator. Wherever Mrs. Eyles goes to-day she finds the workers talking revolution, she says. Our experience is that most of them are talking of rheostats and megohms. She observes that if you herd people in miserable hovels, revolution follows as a natural corollary. This is only very partially true, but Mrs. Eyles draws a curious conclusion from it. She wishes she could shout it in the House of Commons and in comfortable people's drawing-rooms. What for? They would only start a new *Labour Weekly*. Numbers of earnest people have contracted "clergyman's throat" in the House of Commons and many more have induced dyspepsia by drinking tea in comfortable drawing-rooms, airing the agony of the workers. The rich will do anything for the workers, except get off their backs. Shouting won't shift them. We propose shaking them off.

We do not propose to go through the remainder of the paper seriatim, but hope enough has been given to dissuade any member of the working class from wasting his time and his money. As we have said

in this journal with tiresome iteration, the working class has but one problem, and but one solution. All else is fustian and illusion. All other questions melt and dissolve into it. The working class is a slave class. It must end its slavery. There is one way, and only one way, to do it. The workers must grip and conquer the political power that holds them down. There is no "step-at-a-time," there is no "something-now," there is no "half-loaf," that will or can satisfy them. They cannot even remain as they are, be they never so craven. Capitalism moves inexorably on towards the day when its overwhelming plethora will spell universal over-production and economic chaos. The beginnings are here. Who would have thought, seven years ago, that a highly developed country like Great Britain would carry an unemployed surplus of over a million for a period of years? What will happen when all Europe and America and then the at present backward races start producing wealth in immense quantities? When their only markets will be each other, and each has battered its working class down to the lowest practicable limit? When labour-saving machinery and devices have thinned the essential workers to still slenderer limits? We suggest that the workers do not wait until that time. We suggest it is not only desirable, but immediately possible, for the workers in this and every other well-developed capitalist country to inaugurate a new and higher system of society. They must abandon their Micawber attitude of waiting for something to turn up, and organise, definitely and at once, to capture the political power of the State. The next General Election would do, if the workers but understood. Once in possession of political power, the workers can re-organise society upon the lines we have so often sketched out. To the producers, all they produce. He that will not work, neither shall he eat. To each according to his need; from each according to his ability.

W. T. H.

## STUDY ECONOMICS.

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## POLICY AND TACTICS OF SOCIALISM.

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### LESSON No. 3.

*The Socialist attitude toward Trade Unions.*

#### (35) ORIGIN OF TRADE UNIONS.

Trade unions are the outcome of capitalist conditions. The craft guilds flourished when petty enterprise and handicraft was the rule in the cities and the land workers owned their farms in the villages. The guilds died out with the change from feudalism to capitalism. Guilds were composed of men who quickly evolved from workers to masters and their association was a mutual defence body to advance their craft and regulate industry.

The enclosure of their lands and the use of machinery and steam brought men and women together in factories. They were wage workers for life. The chance for them to become masters was gone—they had to make the best of their position as employees. The crowding of the towns with men seeking work brought down wages to a starvation level. Women and children were enticed into the factory hells as the introduction of machinery rendered the skill of the craftsman unnecessary.

In self-defence the workmen were forced to form associations for protection against the greedy and powerful employers. Working side by side, the workers found themselves drawn instinctively together, as experience quickly taught them that the individual workman stood no chance against the powerful factory owner.

#### (36) EARLY STRUGGLES.

The early unions, composed of skilled craftsmen, were necessarily craft in form and local in scope. Their chief weapon was petitions to Parliament.

For a time Parliament made some pretext of enforcing the old laws, but as industry came more and more under the influence of the larger capitalists the Government came out openly against combinations. Unable to obtain redress along constitutional lines, the workers turned to strikes and violence.

Alarmed at the threatening attitude of the men, Parliament rushed through the Combination Acts of 1799-1800. Contrary to expectations, these Acts did not destroy unions, but drove them "underground."

The terrible suffering and misery of men and women employed in the machine-invaded industries caused secret societies, accompanied by riots, machine breaking, and incendiarism, to spring up on all sides.

In 1824, under pressure from the reform element of the capitalists, the Combination Acts were repealed and unions legalised. Immediately unions began to grow and flourish and numerous strikes for higher wages occurred. The next year the crisis of 1825 broke. Industry was brought to a standstill and wages fell on all sides. During this period trade unionism fared disastrously. Most of them were destroyed in the attempt to stem the fall of wages.

The disasters of the past appeared to the most active unionists as the consequence of localised efforts. They now turned to general unions embracing all workers. The greatest of these, The Grand National Consolidated, was formed in 1834 and rapidly increased its membership to over 500,000. It advocated the general strike and some of Robert Owen's communistic schemes. After a short period of activity it fell to pieces under the strain of strikes, boycotts, lock-outs, and the forces of the law. A fundamental source of weakness was the lack of knowledge of its members.

#### (37) THEIR NECESSITY UNDER CAPITALISM.

As shown in Lesson No. 1, the basis of the present system is the class ownership of the means of life. The working class can only exist by selling its labour power on the market. Over the price and conditions of this sale there is a never-ceasing conflict. Possessed of all the economic resources and backed up by the political State, the capitalists use every effort to reduce wages to the minimum—at the same time trying by every available means to lengthen the working day and increase the rate of exploitation. By means of labour-saving devices, greater division of labour, more scientific managements, and the introduction of women and children into industry, an increasing body of unemployed is created. As the system develops it does away with the necessity of the skilled craftsmen and tends to reduce all to the same dead level. The general tendency of the capitalist system is to reduce the working class to the position of the Chinese coolie.

Against the conditions pictured above the individual worker is helpless. In order to

protect themselves, the workers are forced to combine together into unions. Acting together, they are able to exert more pressure on the capitalist class and influence to some degree the conditions under which they live and labour. In actual practice unions can do little more than resist the downward pressure of the system. Instead of improving conditions, their whole energies are required to resist the encroachments of capital.

However much the Socialist may deplore the ignorance of the rank and file, or the treachery of the leaders, however much we might understand the limitations of unions, he must admit that unions are inevitable and necessary under the present system. As someone said, it is the arm that the working class instinctively raises to defend itself.

#### (38) THE SO-CALLED "COMMODITY STRUGGLE."

The struggle over hours and wages arises from the economic position of the working class. It is a struggle by members of one class (workers) against members of another class (employers). Labour-power is unlike any other commodity—it is sold only by one class and bought only by another. The efforts to sell labour power at the highest price and the opposition by the employers is a manifestation of the class struggle. The idea is sometimes preached that the struggle over hours and wages is a purely "commodity struggle," like haggling over the price of fish or meat between buyers and sellers. But the struggle over wage conditions is a direct result of class distinctions produced by the system of private ownership. It is, therefore, not merely a struggle by commodity owners over the price of a commodity. It is a struggle by the working class to secure as much as possible of the wealth produced, against the efforts of owners to retain all they can in the form of "profit." It is, therefore, a part of the class struggle. It is quite true that this fight about hours and wages is not carried on by class-conscious workers. The class struggle, however, is not caused by class-consciousness. It is caused by economic conditions, and when the workers recognise intelligently the class struggle that is going on, they will consciously organise, not to raise wages and shorten hours of slavery, but to abolish the entire system of wage slavery. A. KOHN.

(To be continued.)

## THE ECONOMICS OF MARX.

"The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx." By KARL KAUSKY. Translated by H. J. Stenning. Published by A. & C. Black (1925), 4, 5 & 6, Soho Square, W.1. Price 5/- Net.

The essential economic teachings of Marx are to be found in the three volumes of "Capital" and the "Poverty of Philosophy." The three volumes of "Capital," as published in English by Kerr and Co., Chicago, contain about 2,400 pages, and Kautsky has endeavoured to epitomise this huge mass of material in 248 pages octavo.

Two reasons may be advanced for attempting such a task. One is to give a short survey of the main conclusions of the work in question for the purpose of saving students the time and trouble required to read the original.

The second is to present those conclusions in such simple language that a reader unacquainted with economics may be able to understand what he is reading.

On this second reason Kautsky has certainly failed. In no place is the book more simple than Marx, while in some cases, owing to the need for compression, it is more difficult for the beginner because the illustrations and detailed working out given in the original are absent in the epitome. This is noticeable in the two points that seem so difficult to the beginner, namely, the twofold character of labour, and the fetishism of commodities.

Against the first reason it may be urged that such an epitome tends to superficial study and the formulation of "ready-made" answers in the place of a solid understanding and firm grip of the subject.

But if these objections are overlooked, then one may agree that Kautsky has succeeded in his task with all the skill of a master. The essential points of Marx' teachings are grouped together and their connection and interdependence clearly shown, while the chapter and sub-headings enable the reader to find any particular section with ease, despite the lack of an index.

J. F.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## THE ORIGIN OF CAPITAL AND THE RISE OF WAGE SLAVERY.

The Socialist Party proposes the abolition of capitalism; that is, of the private ownership of the means of social existence, land, machinery, etc. "But," object our opponents, "that is unjust; you propose to rob a class of people of the savings of their forefathers." Let us examine this objection.

Wealth, in any form (and capital is a form of wealth) is the product of human energy applied to nature; in other words, of work or labour. A little reflection will show that the draining, fencing and cultivation of land, the sinking of mine shafts, the construction of railways, docks, roads, etc., and the production of machinery such as exists at present could not possibly be the work of the small class which owns and controls these embodiments of capital, nor yet of their ancestors. These immense forces have been brought into being by the labour of the disinherited mass of society, the working class. Every day this class is busy maintaining, repairing and adding to these instruments, as well as using them for the production of every-day necessities, such as food and clothing, etc.

The owners of capital, as such, do not invent or discover, direct or manage, the process of production, but hand over to salaried experts (specialised members of the working class) these various essential functions. Any part that the ancestors of present-day capitalists may have played in production was as important, *but not more so*, than the part played by those whom they controlled and directed. One of the essential features of capitalist production is its social character, the element of co-

operation involved in each factory, and expressed in the fact that no person can say that this or that article is the product of his or her undivided effort.

The savings which the capitalist class have accumulated have been derived then, not from *their* labour, but from that of society at large. From the sale of goods produced in their various establishments the owners derive money to pay wages, replace raw material and machinery, pay rent, interest and taxes, and then find a surplus to be divided into personal income for the capitalist-owner and revenue with which to increase the capital of the concern. The workers' wages are based, not upon what they have produced, but upon the average cost of living of their class. The greater proportion of the produce of their co-operative labour is thus filched from them under cover of a legal contract by which they make over to their employers the use of their energy for certain periods, *i.e.*, hour, day or week as the case may be.

It is thus obvious that the workers are unable to save up and become capitalists themselves, in spite of the fact that they spend their whole lives in toil. Here and there individuals climb from one class to the other, but their number is exceeded by that of capitalists who are ruined by competition.

The question inevitably arises how this division of society into capitalists and wage-slaves came about. How did the workers become separated from the means of production in the first place? For it is important to notice that capital cannot accumulate so long as the workers remain

in possession of an alternative mode of life to selling their power to labour. Where the workers, for instance, have sufficient land and tools with which to feed, clothe and house themselves, there capital howls in vain for a labour supply. It is restricted to the sphere of commerce.

This was, roughly speaking, the state of affairs in Britain in the fifteenth century. The peasants in the country and the craftsmen in the town, freed from the burden of feudalism to a considerable extent, tilled their land and plied their crafts as it suited themselves and enjoyed the greater proportion of the fruits of their labour. They were organised locally in guilds which supervised trade in the interests of their members.

With the spread of knowledge, the growth of inter-communication and the development of national and international markets, a new economic class arose, i.e., the merchants. In the circumstances of its origin this class had an important social function to perform. It broke down the isolation of the mediæval cities, which was their principal weakness and limitation. It increased the articles of use available in different districts and countries by developing trade and stimulated the increase in social wants and the general standard of life; but the ambition of this class was not to be satisfied with the comparatively limited returns with which purely commercial relations provided them.

The merchants saw that they had to live on the difference between what the workers could produce and what they were able to retain for themselves; and they further saw that, so long as the workers remained in secure possession of their means of production, the share of the merchants would not be large.

The problem facing this enterprising class was thus: How to separate the worker from his tools and means of production, land, etc.

The solution of the problem was the result of the development of the elements of the problem itself. The growing demand for wool led to the big land enclosures and the forcible dispossession of a considerable portion of the peasantry, who had to resort to the towns in search for a livelihood. Thus was provided the labour market desired by the merchants, who set up small factories in competition with the craftsmen.

The process by which merchant capital

eventually captured the whole field was a protracted one lasting from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The first means by which the merchants gained the advantage was by the introduction of division of labour in the workshop. The craft guilds laid down definite limits to the number of apprentices who might be employed by a master; but these restrictions did not affect the new masters, and the larger number of their employees enabled them to split the work up into detail processes at which individual workers specialised, thus increasing the speed and quantity of work turned out.

The wealth produced no longer belonged to the workers; they were paid wages which by degrees were pushed down to subsistence level. The merchant sold the produce of his employees' labour, whose share thus grew less as the total produced increased.

The handicraftsmen carried on the losing struggle in ever-worsening circumstances until the introduction of machinery finally terminated their misery along with their existence. The last obstacle to the industrial supremacy of capital was thus removed. Wealth grew by leaps and bounds, accumulating and concentrating in the hands of the few, while poverty spread over the lives of the many.

Those who wish to gather details of the change above described can hardly do better than read Thorold Rogers' "Six Centuries of Work and Wages" and H. B. de Gibbins' "Industrial History of England," finally consulting "Capital," by Marx, for a critical analysis of the whole process.

E. B.

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(Concluded from last issue.)

#### ROBBERY OF THE WEALTH PRODUCERS.

We have now seen how pauperism has grown over the last 50 years and how the workers have become poorer during the latter half of that period, and it is time to ask whether the capitalist class have shared that poverty. On the contrary we find that in respect of the wealth produced this country has grown continually richer up to 1914. Sir W. Beveridge (*Econ. Journal*, Dec., 1923) gives the following figures of Real Income per head of the population, after allowing for the movement of prices. The figures represent, therefore, a statement of the production of "real" wealth, not merely money prices:—

1860	... £26.0	1890	... £40.0
1870	... £29.6	1900	... £45.9
1880	... £34.1	1910	... £46.9

He clearly explains that while more wealth was being produced it was only the workers who suffered, their loss being the gain of the propertied class.

From 1900-1913 we lived on a rising tide. This also is an element favouring capital as against labour, profits, rather than wages.

And again:

The smooth development of Victorian days was broken, but the characteristic of the time was inequality of fortune rather than general misfortune; discontent rather than poverty; a gain by capital in relation to labour, by profits in relation to wages, by some classes of workmen at the expense of others, even more than a check to our progress as a nation.

Least of all was the poverty of the workers due to natural causes:

Europe on the eve of war was not threatened with a falling standard of life because nature's response to further increase in population was diminishing. It was not diminishing; it was increasing. Europe on the eve of war was not threatened with hunger by a rising real cost of corn; the real cost of corn was not rising; it was falling.

A. L. Bowley ("The Change in the Distribution of the National Income, 1880-1913") estimates the division of the national income as between "Property" and "Wages" at 37½ per cent. and 62½ per cent. respectively; and, further, that this percentage was nearly constant over the period. In this he differs from Mulhall ("Dictionary of Statistics"), who considered that in 1884 the percentage going

to property was only 21 per cent. Sir Josiah Stamp (*Statistical Journal*, July, 1919) estimated the then percentage of "Property" at 32 per cent.

It is, however, necessary to point out how misleading is the classification used by all the above. An enormous number of workers are not engaged in the production and distribution of wealth at all, but are simply employed as personal servants or as profit "snatchers" out of the field of production proper.

Thus the services of the cook and the gardener and the valet are obviously enjoyed only by their employer, the property owner.

Yet in the above classification their wages go to swell the proportion of the "workers."

If we follow the more useful method adopted by Sir Leo Chiozza Money, the picture is presented in another light. He shows how much of the wealth produced actually goes to the workers who produce it.

He estimates the wealth produced in 1913 at £2,150 millions, and says:—

The manual workers, who, with their dependents, accounted for about two-thirds of the entire population, took about one-third of the entire national income, while the income-tax payers, with their dependents, forming only about 5,000,000 of the population, drew nearly as much as the remaining 41,000,000.

(\*Fifty Points about Capitalism, p. 13.)

The remaining portion went to the 4,000,000 clerks, shopkeepers and assistants, small farmers, etc. He considers that the division remained in 1924 approximately what it had been in 1913.

The exploitation of the workers is well illustrated from another angle by the statement made by Mr. Spencer, Liberal M.P. for Bradford, and quoted from the *Daily News* (*New Leader*, October 19th, 1923):—

If you look at the returns of the profits of this firm (Saltaire, Ltd.), you will find that by good management and skill they made a profit of £137 per head on each of their workpeople. Sir Isaac Holden, Ltd., the woolcombers, made a profit of £140 per head of their workpeople last year. . . .

Here we see how the workers' wages could be doubled out of the wealth they produce.

We may notice here how the same process of declining real wages and increasing profits has gone on in America.

In the period from 1897 to 1915, when *real* wages were falling in spite of an enormous increase in national production, business profits far outran the rise in the general price level. . . . From 1897-1913 railroad and industrial stocks advanced about 100 per cent. . . . Moreover, this was a period in which huge corporate surpluses were being set aside out of profits.—(*American Economic Review*, March, 1925.)

#### WHO OWNS "YOUR COUNTRY"?

As for the distribution of capital (as distinct from that of annual income), Professor Henry Clay (*Times*, March 24th, 1925) wrote: "It is probably safe to say that over two-thirds of the national capital is held by less than 2 per cent. of the people." As he also pointed out, such inequality was unknown in eighteenth century England.

#### WASTE OF WEALTH.

Last of all we come to the question of our wasted powers of production. While the workers grow poorer, it is becoming ever easier to produce the things they lack. Labour, land, machinery, etc., exist in excess of society's needs, and only capitalism forbids the production of wealth for the use of those who do not possess legal rights to property in the means of life.

Sir Leo Chiozza Money estimates that 1923 production was from 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. less than that in 1913 (*New Leader*, January 4th, 1924), and shows ("Fifty Points," p. 44) that in 1907

counting as a man a male worker aged 18 years and upwards, there were only 4½ million engaged in producing. . . . The remaining 10,000,000 workers were engaged in transport, or commerce, or professions. When allowance is made for the useful workers amongst these, it is clear that the nation has to support millions of persons condemned by the capitalist system to be non-producers.

To this add the enormous increase in numbers of unemployed and the still greater increase in powers of *potential* production due to inventions, etc., and we can then realise how the workers' actual position compares with what economic conditions would permit it to be under another system of society.

If we take a few typical industries we shall see how great the development is, and also what are the effects of greater efficiency under this system. Thus Mr. Coppock, giving evidence in March, 1925, before the Court of Inquiry presided over by Lord Bradbury, stated that whereas 3,000 million bricks were laid in 1914 by 73,671 bricklayers, in 1924 5,000 million bricks were laid

by only 57,170 bricklayers. More efficiency and its accompanying less employment are threatened in still greater degree should a proposed bricklaying machine prove commercially profitable.

The Triangular Construction Company, of Imber Court, Surrey, have given the first public trial to a simple piece of machinery, invented by Major W. H. Smith, its managing director, which, worked by one skilled bricklayer and a labourer, can erect the walling of houses at a rate equivalent to the laying of 15,000 bricks a day.—(*Daily News*, October 21st, 1925.)

In the agricultural industry of America, it is stated by T. G. Risley, Solicitor of the U.S. Department of Labour, that:—

the American farm labourer produces an average of 12 tons of cereals per year, while the foreign farm labourer only produces 1½ tons of cereals per year. . . . In 1920 there were 1,500,000 fewer men on farms in America than in 1910, yet the crops produced were one-third greater in 1920. (*O.B.U. Bulletin*, Winnipeg, October 1st, 1925.)

In the automobile factories in the U.S.A. the following startling progress has occurred. The figures represent the average number of cars produced per worker per annum in the various years:—

1899	1.66	1914	7.17
1904	1.80	1919	8.97
1909	2.47	1921	11.15
		1923	16.11

They are taken from a report to the Department of Labour submitted by M. W. La Fever.

Almost every capitalist country and every industry could furnish evidence of like developments, and were the achievements of the most advanced countries applied all round, the task of producing all the reasonable requirements of the world's peoples would be incredibly simple. Our powers of production are, in fact, as Sir Leo Chiozza Money puts it:—

Our working power is not less, but far greater than our needs.—(*Triumph of Nationalisation*, p. 18.)

#### ABOLISH CAPITALISM.

But these powers cannot be used to the full and freed from the hindrance of periodic crisis and depression, and the unemployed cannot be allowed to produce because the machinery of production is in the hands of the capitalist class or Governments and Municipalities controlled by them. Only the abolition of private ownership can remedy the evil for the workers. Failure to take this necessary step, and every year's

delay in doing so, leaves the workers faced with certain increase of unemployment, certain increase of insecurity, and certain worsening of their condition relative to that of the employing class, because of the inevitable growth of society's powers of producing wealth. Although for a time, during the early expansion of capitalism, the workers were able to secure a rising standard of living, the tendency in all the leading capitalist nations, including the Colonies of the British Empire, has been for "real" wages to fall since the opening years of this century. While the level in this country may still be higher than that of 1870 (The L.R.D. figures would place it at about the level of 1880), there is no prospect of an improvement in any but the most backward areas of the capitalist world. Furthermore, unemployment and pauperism, "speeding up" and insecurity, have definitely operated to worsen the workers' condition in relation to what it was fifty years ago. Lastly, and most important of all, while the workers have been getting worse off, the means of producing wealth have developed by leaps and bounds. If poverty in 1870 was a phenomenon which many well-meaning observers found incomprehensible, its existence in 1925 is a crime absolutely indefensible, and if only the workers realised, absolutely unnecessary.

H.

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## THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

### A LITTLE ARGUMENT.

"I've read your article in the *Socialist Standard*."

"I am honoured."

"And I don't think much of it."

"I am flattered."

"Don't try to be smart. That is one of the besetting sins of your party."

"What? Being smart, or trying to be?"

"There you are, twisting again. You know what I mean."

"Now, don't get angry, friend. Angry people cannot reason."

"You ought to talk of reason, you did: always savagely attacking the Labour Party. Why don't you devote your energies to attacking the common enemy, instead of other sections of the movement?"

"The movement? What is this you call the 'movement'?"

"There you go again! Twist and wriggle, wriggle and twist. You know my meaning as well as myself. I mean the Socialist movement, the Labour movement."

"But you have just mentioned two movements, my friend. You just now only referred to 'the movement.' Which of them has the honour of being *the* movement?"

"Don't haggle and try to trip me up. They are each part of the same movement; they—"

"But why the distinction if they are the same?"

"They are not the same. The one is part of the other."

"Then which is the one and which the other? Let me put it this way to you: To which do you belong?"

"I belong to the Labour Party, and I claim to be as good a Socialist as you."

"We will examine your claim later. Why do you not belong to the Socialist Party?"

"What! Your lot? I wouldn't be found dead with them! A handful of spiteful, vituperative calumniators; full of spleen, venom and malice; jealous of—"

"Whoa! whoa! Hold hard. Will you admit that I am a Socialist?"

"Oh, yes! I won't deny that."

"Then don't you think you had better reserve your attacks for the common enemy, rather than—"

"All right! I give in. That's one to you. I am afraid my tongue ran away with me."

"Don't think I am trying to rub it in, but have you ever seen an article in the *Socialist Standard* which described a man or a movement by a long string of epithets?"

"I do not recollect one."

"Then precisely what is your grumble about?"

"My point is that you and the cause of the workers would be better served if you confined your criticism to the capitalist parties, and left the Labour Party alone."

"You will think I'm 'wriggling' again, as you call it, but our contention is that your Labour Party is also a capitalist party."

"Oh, don't, for goodness' sake don't trot that out again. Why don't you think of something fresh?"

"Hardly a helpful remark, do you think? Why something fresh? The truth will bear repetition—unless you prefer something else. Why will you so persistently beg the question? Let me save your time and mine by giving you an instance. I will only give you one, but it will perhaps show you what I mean."

"Go ahead!"

"Now then! Do you believe that unemployment is the direct result of capitalism?"

"I do."

"Do you believe that unemployment in Great Britain arises from fundamentally different causes from those in, say, France, Germany or the United States of America?"

"Certainly not. They are all capitalist countries."

"Good! Would you agree that the corner stone—the corner stone mind you—of our troubles is the fact that we are a manufacturing rather than an agricultural nation?"

"No! I should not. I would rather say that capitalism, the private ownership of the means of life, was the corner stone as you call it."

"You are getting on, friend. I have hopes of you yet. But to resume. Would you agree with this statement? 'The simple truth is that when our export trade languishes we have an unemployed problem.'"

"Well, it is true—in a sense."

"In what sense?"

"In a capitalist sense. I mean it takes

the continuance of capitalism for granted."

"That's right. It leaves a lot out. What we would term, a half-truth."

"I agree. Some crafty Liberal Free-Trader, I shouldn't wonder."

"Don't be abusive, friend. Remember how you were going for me a few minutes ago."

"Oh, stow it. This chap is obviously in the other camp. I was only objecting to your knocking your friends about."

"I see. Well, we'll get on. What do you understand by the term 'over-production'?"

"I should say over-production existed when more commodities were produced than the market could absorb. That often happens."

"Would you consider over-production a cause of unemployment?"

"Oh, yes! I should say that was how capitalism created unemployment—through over-production."

"You would not call such a statement a 'lie' or a 'most tragical absurdity.'?"

"Not if I retained my sober senses."

"Let me read this little bit to you:—'For instance, in Northampton, there are thousands of people who want boots, but cannot buy them, and factories with thousands of boots which they cannot sell, and manufacturers with idle machinery capable of turning out thousands of boots which they dare not make, and hundreds of thousands of people unemployed capable of making boots who are not allowed to do so, even for themselves.'"

"That is quite right, too. What is the matter with that?"

"Very little. A trifle loose here and there, but we'll let that go. What is the cause of the state of things depicted?"

"Capitalism, of course. I don't need you to tell me that."

"You may be surprised to learn the writer does not agree. He anticipates people like you. He says: 'Many people will automatically answer, "The evils of the capitalistic system." But the destruction of capitalism would not cure unemployment, because the manufacturer is as anxious to produce as the worker is to consume, and yet both find themselves prevented by the so-called law of supply and demand, which as applied is not a law but a lie.'"

"I say, who is the writer of all this guff? How long has he left school?"

"Don't be impatient friend. You must be dying to hear the real explanation. Here it is: 'No! The explanation of all this failure to link up consumption and production intelligently lies in the control and exploitation of our industry, character, national genius, wealth and goodwill, that is our national credit, by the financiers behind our principal banks.'"

"Oh, dry up, who is this froth merchant? What does he do for a living?"

"Patience, friend; do not be abusive. As I keep reminding you, epithets are not argument. Let us see what is said as to the remedy."

"He says: 'Until, therefore, our national credit is nationally owned and controlled for the benefit of the nation, instead of being exploited and treated as the private property of a mere handful of people, many of whom are not even British —'"

"Does he say that?"

"He does."

"What a filthy remark! Some putrid, anti-alien, Jew-baiter, I suppose."

"What an abusive person you are to be sure. You must learn —"

"All right! I know what you are going to say. Get on with the business. Sorry I spoke."

"Let us see! Where have we got to? After 'British,' the sentence peters out. Then it says: 'The League of the British Commonwealth demands, therefore, the nationalisation of our principal banks as the only permanent remedy for unemployment —'"

"Oh! don't, for goodness sake, don't read any more. What is this precious League of the British Commonwealth? Who are they?"

"Don't be impatient, friend. I must read you this. Remember we have just been told the *only* permanent remedy for unemployment is nationalisation of banks. After three paragraphs of utter flatulence the pamphlet concludes:—'The League of the British Commonwealth declares, therefore, that there is no other solution for our industrial troubles under present conditions in connection with hours, wages, management, etc., except for the workers and their employers to become equal and self-respecting partners.'"

"Oh, what rubbish! Is it possible that—but stay. Is there a catch in this some-

where? Are you pulling my leg? Do you know whom this precious League consists of?"

"I don't! But you may recognise the name of its President."

"Pray who is it?"

"His full title is The Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes, P.C., M.P. Now don't get abusive, friend. Remember what you said at starting."

"But, oh! This is the limit. He is one of our tried and trusted members. I'll admit we are somewhat elastic, but even rubber has a breaking-point."

"Yes! But I don't think your Labour Party has. Why! He is your deputy leader. Now tell me: What do you think we ought to do with people who insist that we are all part of the same 'Movement' and yet who tolerate leaders of that sort. You object to our criticising them as quarrelling with our friends. Save us from our friends! May I point out that criticism will not hurt the truth. May I further point out that this pamphlet was not an obscure, hole and corner affair, but was broadcast by the thousand at the last General Election. They even invite you to write for supplies of the pamphlet from their headquarters. Get a copy. Read it, and if you tolerate the ineffable Clynes in your organisation for a week after doing so—well, I must not be abusive, must I?"

"You have made me think."

"Keep on doing it. It hurts at first, but if you do enough of it, you will join the Socialist Party. Cheerio!"

W. T. H.

## KNOWLEDGE.

The following Books can be obtained from Head Office:—

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**The Socialist Standard,**

DEC.,



1925

**WHY SOCIALISTS OPPOSE LEADERSHIP.**

If we are without knowledge, as, for instance, in social affairs, we are at the mercy of those who say that they know, and who are endeavouring to persuade or drive us to follow out a course of action that they say is for our good.

There is a group of people who propagate the view that the working class are an ignorant lot, incapable of deciding what form of society is best for them, or, in the event of a new form of society coming into existence, running such a society in a proper businesslike manner. This group of people proclaim that it is necessary for a few intellectuals to apply their cultured brains to social problems, tell the workers what must be done, prepare the framework of a new society, and occupy all the important posts under any new arrangement of social affairs. To such people leadership is an essential idea, as democracy is supposed to be incapable of managing its own affairs.

Now, democratic methods may result in slow motion, may have many faults, but they are as nothing against the waste of effort, the sickening failures, and the empty achievements obtained by methods of autocratic rule, or rule by faction or clique.

The case for the capable man in the right job sounds plausible until we look at the results before our eyes. The temptation to stay in a good job, prolonging its lease of

life, and blind the eyes of the trusting followers has, so far, been irresistible to the majority of the cultured that have sought a career in labour affairs. Once having got ahead of the crowd, they do their best to stay there and make the job as comfortable and lucrative as possible.

The weakness of the intellectuals' position is apparent once we look at the matter with a little attention. Let us take the case of a man we are entrusting with the carrying out of certain work. How can we judge of the capabilities of such a man unless we ourselves have a fair knowledge of the work he is to do and the results he is to achieve?

Knowledge is the only safeguard for the workers against trickery and false advocates, and it is also the only doorway through which society can pass to a society based upon common ownership. If the mass of those who are seeking a new arrangement of social affairs do not possess knowledge of what they want and how it is to be attained, then a new society can only be a new chaos, be the leaders of the people as cultured as they may.

The way of the intellectual is a curious one. He points out that the mass of the people are ignorant, but, instead of showing how they can obtain knowledge, he contends for the improvement in affairs according to his own plan, so that the people will, unconsciously, come into the new Jerusalem. Instead of seeing that it is possible for the people to be educated, he sets out with the assumption that such a thing is absurd.

The leadership group is composed of two elements; the one lays stress upon the "capable man" side, and the other lays stress upon the "trusted leader" of spectacular movements.

That modern society is a complex affair is a fact that should hardly need labouring, yet there are many who think that, like the prophet, they can blow down the walls of Jericho with a trumpet. This false idea leads to the enthusiastic and futile strike demonstrations and the like, that are much favoured by the Communists, although Russian example ought to have knocked such rubbish out of most people's heads. However, it has not done so. It is still necessary to point out that the running of society requires a vast amount of technical and administrative knowledge. This knowledge the worker can obtain by study and

taking active part in the work of a political organisation having for its object the establishment of Socialism and for its methods democratic principles.

It will not be by mob rule, nor yet by the rule of intellectuals, but the rule of educated democracy that the new society will be ushered in and its needs met. Educated democracy would adopt means to select the most fitting people for given occupations, and, having the knowledge themselves as to the general course to be followed, would see that those selected carried out their duties properly.

There is a tendency to confuse the appointment of capable men for a job with the appointment of leaders, and this confusing of the two is done by the intellectual type above mentioned.

Take a leaf out of the book of an ordinary capitalist business organisation. When a company is formed a Board of Directors takes charge of affairs and appoints managers and the like. Now, the Directors are, themselves, by no means necessarily capable managers and so forth, but they know quite well what they want and have a general idea how it is to be obtained. We are, of course, referring to the Directors who really act as such, and not to the ornamental figureheads who frequently figure on Boards. Above all, they want the business to pay, and, therefore, before the managers can embark on any enterprise they must first of all convince the Board that such an enterprise is a paying proposition. This analogy will serve to illustrate the point. The educated worker will have to be convinced by reason, and not emotion, before he gives his support to any proposition.

A man who can speak well and move an audience by emotional outbursts is usually lacking in the accomplishments necessary to perform work of any administrative nature, and yet, under the influence of the leadership idea, this is just the type of man who generally falls into the administrative vacancy.

Let us leave the intellectual and emotional leaders to take care of themselves, and conclude this brief article with a question and an answer.

How would society have to organise in the future, assuming the workers were in the seat of power?

The first consideration of society, in such circumstances, would be to provide a living

equally for all its members and the second consideration would be that the living should be a comfortable one. First the hunger problem would have to be settled and the housing and clothing; and then the æsthetic side of life could receive attention.

It is argued that if we were all comfortably placed, that life would be dull and drab, and that it is the ups and downs that make life interesting. It would be difficult to prove this point to the sleeper on the Thames Embankment, the dweller in the slum, the sufferer from lead poisoning, or the prostitute. It is small comfort to such as these, whose lives are made up of "downs," to appreciate the delight of the alternating phases. It will usually be noticed that those who preach the gospel of the alternating phases are they who have been favoured with the "ups"! It is equivalent to the moral sermon preached by the rich to the man who steals a loaf because he is hungry.

Most of us lead dull, drab lives from our earliest to our latest days, and yet we can end this state of affairs if we wish. The chief consideration is that the majority of us must do the wishing. The father to this wish is the acquirement of the knowledge of why we are poor, and how to end our poverty.

**SAFETY AND PROFITS.**

The summoning of a motor-bus driver at Marylebone Police Court recently, for driving in excess of the speed-limit, gives one more illustration of the dangers that attend the running of industries for the profit of shareholders, instead of for the use of everybody.

The case was reported in the *Observer* (22/11/25) as follows:—

George John Hickling, when summoned at Marylebone Police Court yesterday for driving a motor-omnibus in the Bayswater Road at twenty-seven miles an hour—fifteen in excess of the speed limit—told the magistrate he was trying to make up lost time. He had since been dismissed, he said, for not going fast enough.

"What is to be done?" asked the magistrate. "The safety of the public makes it necessary that buses should go at a reasonable speed." The magistrate then read the notice of dismissal, which stated, "I have tried you with two conductors of experience, and they both complain that

they cannot earn money with you in the way you work the road, leaving us no option but to make a change." "I suppose," said the magistrate, "that means that you are not going fast enough?"

The Defendant: That is so.

The magistrate said it was "very hard," and, instead of fining the defendant 20s., he ordered him to pay 10s., saying he must fine him something to protect the public.

It is curious that a case like this should come before the courts at a time when a certain amount of feeling is being stirred up by the frequency of road accidents. It suggests, to those who care to give the subject proper consideration, the real cause of many of the street accidents that occur in London, and other towns, where there is a good deal of road traffic, leaving aside for the moment the accidents caused by the rich pleasure seekers, who smash each other up as well as other unfortunate people, using the public roads as if they were private racing tracks.

When men are employed as drivers of commercial motor vehicles, whether passenger or goods carriers, the job goes to, and generally stays with, the driver who is the most profitable to employ. Such a driver is the one who can get over the ground the fastest. Consequently, haunted by the fear of losing a job, the drivers tear through the congested streets as fast as they dare. If there is an accident, it is not the employers who are hauled before the courts, but the drivers, and consequently the outcry against increasing accidents is directed at the drivers, and not those who spur the drivers on to excessive speed. Here and there, to avoid responsibility, employers point out that they distribute certificates and good conduct stripes to the drivers who have the record that is clearest of accidents, but they omit to add that the drivers who cannot get through an average day's work that is steadily increasing are sacked as incompetent drivers.

Motor drivers are in the same boat as other workers; they must work at the very top of their capacity in order to compete successfully for jobs. The difference between them is only this, that when a driver has gone past the point at which his capacities allow him to work properly, or when the strain has reached breaking-point, there is frequently an accident. Here as in other spheres of employment the cause

of things going wrong must be sought in the same place. It is not the man who should be blamed when an accident occurs, but the system which compels men to endanger their own lives, as well as the lives of others, in order to gain a livelihood.

GILMAC.

### NEW PUBLICATIONS FUND.

Donations are still invited for this fund. Our new pamphlet on Socialism is now being printed and will be ready very shortly.

A full list of acknowledgments to this fund to date appears below.

### PUBLICATIONS FUND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
West Ham Branch (2) ..	6	0	0			
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J.F.H.						

**A discussion class will be held every alternate Thursday Evening (from Oct. 8th, 1925), at 167, Romford Road, Stratford, E.15, at 8 p.m. An appeal is made to members of the public to attend and take part in the discussion.**

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.

By the Industrial Revolution is meant that rapid and complete change in the methods of production and distribution, which, becoming increasingly evident during the first three-quarters and very marked during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, has continued without intermission to the present day. It involved the breaking up of the old forms of the organisation of production and their replacement by others; the superseding of the skill of the craftsman by machinery; the widespread application of mechanical power to manufacture, and later to transport both on land and sea. It was the cause of the rise of new social classes, and new social relationships with their own peculiar problems requiring to be solved.

An enormous increase of population was made possible, concentrated in fresh areas, and industrial towns arose which in turn led to important developments in sanitary science and alterations in local government. With this progress new ideas were spread abroad which were in keeping with the changed conditions.

In the middle of the eighteenth century this country was still largely agricultural. The bulk of the population (at that time about six millions) was engaged in agriculture, and even as late as 1773 corn was regularly exported. Many even of those workers who worked at other occupations also relied partly on their small plots of land. The country was, on the whole, prosperous, its population and its trade were increasing steadily, and it stood in importance second only to France. By far the largest industry was the wool and cloth manufacture, which was regarded by the Government as of great national importance. The cotton industry was small but increasing, and there was already a distinct tendency for both to concentrate in Lancashire and Yorkshire, with a consequent decline of the Eastern counties.

Owing to the scarcity of wood for charcoal making, the iron industry, never very large, was scattered and more or less stagnant. Coal had not yet come into general use for household purposes and means had not been found then of using it successfully for iron smelting. The amount raised each year was only 4½ million tons. The roads were so bad as to be often impassable after

wet weather, and these being the only means of internal transport except where there happened to be navigable rivers, the amount of traffic was exceedingly small. Coal, for instance, was brought to London by sea from Newcastle.

As with goods so with people, for there was usually little need for people to travel or change their place of living.

The spinning and weaving of wool and cotton were carried on in the main in the homes of the workers, who were not, as now, brought together in the employer's factory.

The development of machinery to replace hand labour began in the textile trades. With an increasing foreign and colonial demand for cotton goods it was found that spinning by hand could no longer suffice. Workers were also semi-independent and in a position therefore to demand high wages. As a consequence great efforts were made to invent machinery to supplant hand labour, and in 1764 Hargreaves was successful with his spinning jenny. This was supplemented by Arkwright's water frame four years later, and in 1775 Crompton's mule further extended the sphere of the machine.

Evidence of the revolution in the cotton industry is that the import of cotton wool rose from 11 million lbs. in 1780 to 56 million lbs. in 1800.

Similar progress was made later in the woollen industry.

When the use of coal became more general great difficulty was experienced in keeping the mines from flooding, because as the shafts went deeper hand pumps became useless. About 1700 Savery and Newcomen invented steam pumps, and Newcomen's engine partly solved the problem for a while. In 1782 Watt so far improved on the old pattern of engine as to reduce the consumption of coal by three-quarters and his engine soon superseded Newcomen's. The amount of coal raised had increased by 1816 to 15 million tons, the demand coming now chiefly from the iron industry. As has been said, this industry had been languishing for lack of fuel. A series of inventions, particularly those of the Darbys, made it possible to use coal instead of charcoal. Henry Cort and others found a method of purifying the iron and

the development then was extraordinarily rapid. The production of pig iron, which in 1783 was only 90,000 tons, had risen by 1820 to 400,000 tons and by 1860 to 4 million tons.

During the early years of the nineteenth century steam power was being applied to the textiles and other industries, and each of these developments in iron, coal, etc., had its reflex in a corresponding stimulus to other industries.

The last half of the eighteenth century also saw great activity in improving communications. The great turnpike roads made wheeled traffic possible, and the building of canals, which by the end of that century had become almost a mania, gave the first real solution of the problem of transporting bulky goods.

Then Stevenson built his steam locomotive, which completed the solution as regards internal communication. Railways turned this country into one big market of which no considerable area was any longer inaccessible. Steamships were built, and with the opening up of America, Russia, and later Africa, India and Asia, by means of railways the stage was reached in which the enormous powers of machine production could be adequately used in supplying the manufacturing needs of a world market, from which in turn our food and raw materials were drawn.

Another great forward leap was made when machines were produced capable of reproducing in unlimited quantities the parts of machines themselves, thus laying the foundation of the modern engineering industry.

Accompanying the process outlined above came the growth of the factory system with the massing of hundreds and thousands of workers under one roof, and the concentration of a huge industrial population in a few coal areas in South Wales, the Midlands and the North.

This led directly to struggles by the workers to organise themselves and the growth of the labour movement, with bitter conflicts between employers and workers, and the spread of new ideas of class interest and Socialism unknown to eighteenth-century England.

The nineteenth century also witnessed the political struggle for the extension of the Franchise, changing the whole basis of government.

The State has developed wholly new

functions. The growth of industrial towns and the rise of the factory system have led respectively to the systematic study of sanitation and public health, and the building up of a code of protective legislation for the workers necessitated by excessive exploitation in the factories and mines; first, for children and women, and, latterly, for men as well. The new methods have again produced the need for a wholesale raising of the level of education and the present State activity in this direction, in order to cope with the technical development of industry.

The Industrial Revolution is the general description given to the complicated movement outlined above.

To understand why the Industrial Revolution came in England it will be useful to make a brief comparison with the other nations of Europe. The only nations at that time of any serious industrial and commercial importance were France, England and Holland. Spanish sea power had been shattered in the sixteenth century and she was no longer a serious rival; Russia had but recently entered on a course of industry and commerce, and Germany was still suffering politically and economically from the exhaustion following the thirty years' war, 1618-1648.

The population of England and Scotland was about 9 millions in 1780, that of France 20 millions and that of Holland only 3 or 4 millions. The Dutch had lost their seafaring advantages and were already declining in importance. They had in any event always specialised in financial and commercial rather than industrial undertakings, and at that time the internal condition of Holland was disturbed. The choice, therefore, lay between England and France. Why, in view of France's larger trade and greater industrial activity did the Industrial Revolution occur in England and not in France?

France had a population nearly three times as great; her foreign trade in 1780 amounted to £40 million as against £22 million for England. Domestic industry in France was developing rapidly with the removal of legal hindrances in 1762, and French peasants were in comparison with those of most other European countries fairly prosperous. French foreign trade was extending, and with America, for instance, was larger than ours. The rate of increase between 1715 and 1787 was also

greater. Paris had a larger population than London, and not only in Europe, but in the West Indies, Canada and India, France had a decided advantage.

In spite, however, of whatever initial advantages France may have possessed, her position became hopeless with the disastrous internal struggle of the Revolution and the external wars which followed. It is true the outbreak of war in 1793 immediately lost us our trade with Holland and France, but already English foreign trade had doubled between 1782 and 1792, and France, on the other hand, was at once cut off from her own colonies and lost her important American trade. The internal state of chaos, while contending classes fought for mastery, meant the complete cessation of the industrial development which had begun, and, in fact, normal commercial activities became almost impossible.

Even prior to the Revolution, however, the conditions existed which gave the victory to the English capitalists.

While it is true that the French peasants were prosperous, their main desire was always to own land, and their savings became absorbed in this rather than in industrial investment. In England the Bank of England had been formed in 1694, and since then there had been considerable accumulation of capital, which, by the legal prohibition of Joint Stock trading, had been turned to industrial undertakings. In France, again, through a deplorable financial policy, the State was well-nigh bankrupt, currency was bad, and, owing to the failure of big financial schemes in the early part of the century, people had no faith in investments. When it is remembered how expensive were the experiments which led to mechanical inventions, how costly were the new machines, and how large were the new undertakings in comparison with the old, the importance of big and easily accessible capitals is obvious.

England's second advantage appeared at first to be a misfortune. France had no lack of workers, but throughout the 18th century continual complaint was made in England that the shortage of labour, and the consequent high wages made competition with the French well-nigh impossible. Many workers had small holdings and were to a large extent independent of the manufacturers who employed them. A scarcity of labour, however, always encourages the

installation of labour-saving machinery. The shortage creates the demand, and this is invariably satisfied by inventions when it arises. It is instructive to note that it was in the spinning industry that machinery first became important, because weavers had long been handicapped by the insufficient supply of yarns. When machinery had solved that problem, inventions to remedy the consequent shortage of weavers were at once in demand, and before long the demand was satisfied.

Again, England enjoyed large and expanding markets, without which naturally these developments would not have occurred. Had there not been a constant and ever-growing demand for cotton goods, it would have been worth no one's while to invest money in the large-scale production of cotton. Holland, owing to the competition of England, France and Germany, and her loss of her semi-monopoly of the world's shipping, had a declining trade, and it was not to the interest of individual producers to commit themselves to the expense of enlarging their production.

In this country, too, the population was free from the restrictions of movement which were still the rule in France and Holland at that date. Peasants in France were tied to their birthplaces by their ownership of land and by the dues they had to render to their feudal lords. How, in such circumstances, could there have been such migrations and concentrations of population as took place in England? Without such massing in the coal areas there could have been no developments of production such as did take place with the introduction of mechanical power.

The Guilds in France and Holland were still largely in control, and were able successfully to oppose factory production. In England they had by this time long decayed. In England, too, there was a degree of security unknown in any other European country, and, of equal importance, this country (except Ireland) was economically one market. It was not split into tariff divisions, of which France had three, Holland seven, and Germany 300. While the financial institutions were by no means so delicate and complex as to-day, one has but to observe the effect of the actual, or imagined, political insecurity of the present Russian Government to realise how incompatible are flourishing trade and a lack of political confidence.

Further, in England, coal and iron are found conveniently near each other. In the days before the building of railways even a distance of ten or twenty miles was sufficient to prohibit transport cheap enough for iron making. This need not have proved fatal to France, as wooden machines and water power were the first stage of development, but by that time French industry was already half in ruins.

Lastly, English merchants had had long experience of large-scale production and export in the wool trade, and the experience so gained was available for the many directions in which it was now needed.

The combination of these advantages gave England the certain lead over most countries, and France, the one serious rival, was—owing to the Revolution—out of the running for forty years. H.

## SOCIALISM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

### A REPLY TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Mr. Rimington, of Leicester, in writing to us on various matters, takes exception to the passage in the sixth clause of our Declaration of Principles, that states the working class must organise for "the conquest of the powers of Government, National and Local," etc.

He argues that while this passage is quite correct when applied to the Legislature, it is inconsistent and illogical where it refers to the local bodies, as he cannot understand "a Socialist administering a Capitalist institution."

Although this clause was drawn up thirteen years before the upheaval in Russia in 1917, the latter event furnished a useful illustration of the necessity for a new party taking power being in control of "Local" as well as "National" Governments. The confusion, delays, and, in many cases, acute sufferings caused to the workers by the deliberate wrecking and sabotage policy of those in charge of local administration, showed how important—if secondary—such control is to the new rulers.

Moreover, so far from leading to "Reformism," as Mr. Rimington contends, the contesting of local elections, on the policy of the S.P.G.B., allows us to show up the absurdity of the claims of the Reformers. Our literature and speakers point out clearly the limitations of the local

bodies, and when our candidates are returned they will use the wider platform of the Council to carry on the propaganda of Socialism and take the various instances as they arise to demonstrate the restrictions imposed by the Government. This propaganda will help to show more clearly the essential need of capturing the Governmental powers. Such "administrative" work as may be carried out would no more be illogical than is the acceptance and obeying of the regulations under which we carry on public meetings and sales of literature.

In brief, the capture of the Local bodies is necessary to render as smooth as possible the passage of the revolution, and in the meantime it is useful as a wider means of propaganda. ED. COM.

## WAR-TIME FAIRY TALES.

Little by little facts are leaking out which expose the hypocrisy and unscrupulousness of the Allied Government in their efforts to blacken the character of the trade rival they wished to suppress in the late war.

Through the instrumentality of Brigadier-General Charteris we learn that the tale about the German "Corpse Factory" was only a fake after all. This tale was much exploited during the war to induce or coerce men to join up and help to smash the power of the "Hun."

Poison gas was supposed to be another illustration of German frightfulness. Last year Professor Pollard, of London, disposed of this fairy tale when addressing the Education Society of the South and West, at Plymouth. The *Daily News* correspondent reported Professor Pollard's remarks in the following way:

Incidentally, he said, it was a British chemist—whom he knew well—and not the Germans who first proposed the use of poison gas in war. He proposed its use to the Japanese Government during the Russo-Japanese War.—(*Daily News*, May 12th, 1924.)

Under the influence of war fever, atrocities are always committed, but it is the game of each side to magnify the crimes committed by the other side. Wars are among the evils born out of private property and are on the same moral level as may be inferred from the fact that religious organisations on each side urge the respective combatants to fly at each other's throats.

When sufficient working men grasp the

hollowness of war ideals and war stories it will be difficult in war time to persuade them to enlist for the purpose of murdering one another.

During the last great war I was reproached for not taking my part in the great struggle for "liberty and the protection of small nationalities." The friend who reproached me pointed out that if everyone acted as I did England would be overrun by the Germans and our sacred fatherland would be filched from us. When, in reply, I pointed out that if everyone acted as I did there would be no war, as there would be no one to fight, my friend was taken aback, stumped; he hadn't thought of that! And it is curious how many working men take up this attitude. They look upon working men of other nations as being composed of different material from themselves; as aliens in thought, feelings and desires. This view is entirely wrong. Working men of other countries are of the same human material as English working men; they are in a similar subjected position and have similar loves, hopes, fears, and desires; and finally they are duped by their masters in similar ways. GILMAC.

## PROHIBITION.

We are not opposed to the Prohibition—of swipes and adulterated water. Nor do we, like the brewer and his friends, pretend that Prohibition is a matter of vital concern to the workers. There is a Socialist view on this matter, but, like our views on all questions, it is in conflict with those of the reformer. The brewer endeavours to convince us that drinking is a noble and commendable act, for the same reason that the Nonconformist cocoa manufacturer boasts of the food value of his product and supports the Temperance movement. Profit greed determines what they think good for the dear worker, and the Temperance reformer with the anti-Prohibitionist reflect their interests. "Drink causes poverty!" says the former, in his inverted reasoning. The fact is that the workers are born poor and must remain poor within the capitalist system because wages never provide more than a bare existence even to the life abstainer. "Without drink," the reformer tells you, "money formerly so spent could be used to purchase things more necessary." He incidentally plays upon a weak spot by the

glad news that such alternative expenditure will mean more wor-r-r-k. In face of the ever-increasing army of unemployed, willing to accept a job at the lowest possible price, the idea that the workers would continue to receive the same wage after a lowered cost of living—is a joke. The sum spent on drink is an item in the average wage; if it should become no longer necessary, the abstainers' previous advantage will disappear. As a result of Prohibition, those engaged in the brewing industry, including auxiliary workers, publicans, barmen, maids, cork and glass makers, sign writers, carmen, etc., would lose their employment. In actual practice this is the fate of the present unemployed whose numbers are in excess of the requirements of capitalistically produced wealth. Some claim that drink causes wretchedness, but the pathologist could prove quite the reverse. We know by experience that poverty surroundings cause depression. Drink is merely an attempt to counter its effects. In a city like Glasgow, where poverty and slumdom stalk naked and unashamed, the craving for stimulants almost becomes a disease with some of the very poor. Unable to afford ordinary spirits, they resort to methylated spirits as a substitute. It is vile living conditions that cause people to become hopeless sots; it drives them to the glamour of the tavern. Whilst capitalism persists, most moderate drinkers will continue by habit to take to the present method as the line of easiest resistance to obtain a makeshift social intercourse and infuse a little colour into a grey world. As to the need in the future for alcoholic beverages, that can be safely left to a generation wise enough to realise that this earth provides the only opportunity that they will have to enjoy paradise. Those who produce the best will have the best, for with the coming of a sane system of society the cheap and nasty pleasures reserved the workers will be laid to rest with all the sordidness of the present system. MAC.

## S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS.

### LONDON DISTRICT.

- Sundays:** Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.
- Mondays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
Islington, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.
- Thursdays:** Hackney, Queens Road, Dalston, 8 p.m.
- Fridays:** Clerkenwell, Garnault Place, 8 p.m.  
West Ham, Water Lane, Stratford, 7.30 p.m.  
Leyton, James Lane, nr. Leyton Stn., 7.30 p.m.

**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

- BATTERSEA.**—Communications to Sec., 2, Hanbury-rd., S.W.11. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road. Discussion last Thursday in month. Open to all.
- BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to E. Jesper, 74 Murdoch-rd., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.
- CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.
- CLERKENWELL.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8 p.m., at 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1. Discussions every Wednesday at 8.45 p.m.—all invited. Communications to Sec., at above address.
- EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.
- EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.
- GLASGOW.**—Communications to Sec., J. Higgins, 816, Rutherglen-rd., Oatlands, Glasgow.
- HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Saturdays, 7 p.m. at The Old Gravel Pit Hall, Mare Street, Hackney.
- HANLEY.**—Branch meets Tuesdays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., W. Rowney, 43, Paddock St., Hanley, Staffs. Open to all.
- ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.
- LEYTON.**—Communications to Sec., 88, Dunedin-rd., Leyton. Branch meets 8 p.m., Trades and Labour Hall, Grove House, High-rd., every Tuesday. Public invited.
- MANCHESTER.**—The Sec., 28, Peter St., High-town, Manchester. Branch meets Clarion Café, Market St., 2nd and 4th Wednesday in month, at 8.30 p.m.
- SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.
- TOOTING.**—Sec., A. Yeomans, 15, University-rd., Collier's Wood, S.W. 19. Branch meets every Thursday at 8 p.m.
- TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 17, Antil-road, Broad Lane, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.
- WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to S. E. Williams, 85, Park-road, E.10. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.
- WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 162, High Street, Watford.
- WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.
- WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Stirling House, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, N.22.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.